

# Dragon Brothers

by YinYangWriter

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Summary: The third installment of the Dragon Trainer, Dragon Speaker series, sequel to Dragon Trainer, Dragon Speaker and Brave Dragon Trainers. Begins with the season one finale and goes through the second season. Wild dragons and Outcasts were bad enough, but things keep getting worse for the riders. Lucky for them they have Grim and Deathshriek to help them out.

## 1. Chapter 1

**\*\*And now we are into the Riders of Berk season finale. It all begins here. This will cover the season one finale and go through Defenders of Berk. After that, there will be another crossover, but I'm not telling you what HTTYD will be crossed with. You're very welcome to guess what it is in your reviews or PMs. I'll tell you this; it's not going to be an easy guess. For now, I am giving you the first chapter and I might post the second chapter because I am going on vacation and won't post again until the middle of next week because I won't be able to access Fan Fiction or my email unless my friends is nice and let's me use her smartphone. The reviews will be comforting while I'm smearing aloe on my sunburn.\*\***

\* \* \*

><p>It had been several weeks since the Vikings had returned to the Berk after the death of the Scottish Death. Things had been quiet compared to what they had experienced.<p>

The Haddock family had grown a little on their return. It was now Stoick, Hiccup, and Grim, along with their dragons, Thornado, Toothless, Deathshriek, and the newest member, Fearcloak, a Creeping Shadow dragon from Scotland. Fishlegs had originally brought the little wounded dragon back with him to study and keep as a companion to Meatlug, Fearcloak wanted none of that. He certainly liked Fishlegs and Meatlug, but he liked Grim more. The dragon speaker quickly learned the little dragon wasn't going anywhere without him and made a place in the house for him.

Grim and Deathshriek flew around the island. They were preparing for Bork Week, the creator of the Book of Dragons. The others were working on their dragon calls in the forest. Grim did not need to practice since he had mastered Dragonese in several dialects.

The dark blue and black Baleful Banshee soared through the air just as gracefully as Toothless, due to their physical similarities. Deathshriek was only a little larger and colored differently, much like his rider was from Hiccup. Grim's hair was dark and shaggy, contrasting sharply with his pale features and pure blue eyes.

For Bork Week, Stoick wanted to have an air show. It was the first year that Vikings and dragons were at peace. Grim had taken it upon himself to plan the flight around the village. The different dragons would be showing off different formations. Grim and Deathshriek flew around the suggested flight path to see if it would work out.

A small screech caught Grim's attention as they flew. He turned to see Fearcloak flapping his wings furiously to keep up with Deathshriek.

"\*\*Fearcloak, what are you doing out here?\*\*" Grim asked.

The Creeping Shadow caught up to Deathshriek and grabbed onto the blue and black hide with his wings. "\*\*I didn't want to be at the house by myself. Stoick and Thornado left and Hiccup and Toothless are at dragon training.\*\*"

"\*\*You could have gone with them,\*\*" said Grim.

Creeping Shadows had thin bodies about three feet long, two long tails, narrow heads with four red eyes, and strong black wings that were double the length of their bodies. They walked on their feet and wings, like Nightmares. Fearcloak crawled across Deathshriek's back to Grim and climbed up on Grim's back, easily gripping the dark blue and black shirt made out of dragon scales.

"\*\*I want to go with you,\*\*" said Fearcloak, arranging his wings to hold on with his tiny wing claws to Grim's shoulders. It was one of Fearcloak's favorite things to do. Ever since his wing was healed enough, he clung to trees, walls, and people, especially Grim. It was how he earned his name. When Fearcloak hung off Grim's shoulders, tucking his head, he looked like an old, ragged cloak.

"\*\*We won't be up here for much longer,\*\*" said Grim. "\*\*Deathshriek, let's do one more path and then we'll go find the riders.\*\*"

"\*\*All right, Grim,\*\*" Deathshriek said.

After flying one more path, they searched for the others. Deathshriek found Hiccup and Toothless first and turned to land next to them. Astrid was also there with Stormfly. She and Hiccup were talking about something. Hiccup seemed upset by it.

"Am I interrupting something?" Grim asked.

"No," said Hiccup.

"What is wrong?" Grim asked.

Astrid gave an aggravated sigh. "Snotlout opened his mouth."

Deathshriek let out a groan. "\*\*\*What foul stench came out of the fool's mouth this time?\*\*\*"

Grim chuckled.

Astrid frowned. "What did he say?"

"'What foul stench came out of the fool's mouth this time?'" Grim repeated. Seeing Astrid and Hiccup were still a little confused, he elaborated. "The saying comes from when foolish dragons eat something they should not have and get sour stomach. It makes their breath foul."

"I thought it always smelt a little foul," said Astrid.

"To us, yes, but that's because of all the fish they eat," Grim said. "To them, it is tolerable. Now, what did Snotlout say?"

"We were talking about the air show," said Astrid. "Snotlout said that Toothless doesn't have anyone to fly with. Hiccup seems to think he's lonely."

Deathshriek scoffed. Grim reached behind him and put his hand on the Baleful Banshee's nose.

"Hiccup," Grim said softly, "Toothless is not unhappy. He is happy with us. He sees us as his family."

Astrid snapped her fingers. "I almost forgot. Your father and Gobber looking for you. Both of you." She climbed up on Stormfly. "They're waiting for you in the great hall. They looked serious." She left.

"Ah, great," Hiccup said. "Happy Bork Week to me."

Grim urged Deathshriek into the sky to follow Astrid. It did not take long before they caught up with her.

"Astrid!"

The blonde looked over her shoulder. "Grim, what's going on? Stoick and Gobber are waiting for you."

"I wanted to tell you the next time you see Snotlout, tell him he should watch his back," Grim said.

"What are you going to do to him?" asked Astrid.

"Nothing." Grim gave an evil smirk. "But he does not know that."

Astrid mirrored his evil smirk. "No problem."

Deathshriek banked hard, Grim steering him to the village. They landed at the great hall. Toothless was waiting outside and Deathshriek joined him.

"\*\*Wait with them,\*\*" Grim told Fearcloak, pushing off his shoulders.

Hiccup and Grim opened the doors to the great hall. They walked in to see Stoick, Gobber, and other Vikings facing the large table. They turned around as the two came closer.

"Okay, this is weird," said Hiccup.

"Hiccup, Grim, come forward," said Stoick in an authoritative tone.

The two boys stepped forward.

"And hold out your hands, Hiccup," Stoick added.

Hiccup began to hold out his hands, but quickly put them behind his back. "Uh, Dad, Gobber, other scary-looking Vikings? I just want to say, in my own defense, I cannot control Snotlout or the twins twenty-four hours a day."

"This isn't about those jokers, Hiccup," said Gobber. "It's something really good."

Stoick let out an annoyed sigh. "Now then, Hiccup, Grim, as you know Bork Week has begun, the first one since we made peace with the dragons. So it has been decided, from this moment forward, all things dragon related, including Bork's life's work, shall be entrusted to you and the Dragon Academy."

Hiccup's face lit up.

Gobber set a chest on the table. "This is where the Book of Dragons started. Everything he ever wrote on the subject is written in these notes. Personal thoughts, feelings, fears, even some delicious recipes, are all here." He opened the chest to show him the notes.

"Whoa," breathed Hiccup. "I don't know what to say." He looked at Stoick. "Thank you, Dad. This is -."

"Son, this is a big part of our history," said Stoick. "You and the dragons are a big part of our future. It's now up to you to take care of both."

Gobber picked up the chest to hand to Hiccup. Hiccup took it, but Gobber wouldn't give it up.

"Gobber," Stoick said. "Gobber!"

"Right." Gobber let go of the chest, causing Hiccup to stumble back.

Grim quickly reached forward and helped Hiccup get his balance without dropping the chest.

Gobber looked saddened. "They're yours now."

Hiccup turned to the doors to take the chest back to the house.

Grim began to follow. A large hand fell on his shoulder. He stopped and turned to Stoick.

"Grim, this responsibility falls on your shoulders as well," said Stoick. "You are part of this tribe, this family. It would be wrong to exclude you."

\* \* \*

><p>Later that night, Hiccup was up late looking at the dragon archives. Grim lay on his bed with Deathshriek curled on his slab next to Toothless' slab.<p>

"Why didn't Bork put this in the Book of Dragons?"

Grim sat up. "How long are you going to be up? I am trying to sleep."

"Sorry," said Hiccup. "But Grim, look. Bork wrote about an island inhabited by Night Furies."

Grim got up. "But he did not put it in the Book of Dragons?"

"It's weird," said Hiccup.

Toothless nudged Hiccup, looking at the pages.

Hiccup put his hand on Toothless' nose. "Toothless, we have to find that island. If we do, we find your family."

Toothless gave a small purr. "\*\*\*I already am home. But I would not mind seeing other Night Furies.\*\*"

Deathshriek raised his head from the slab. "\*\*\*It would be nice to meet other Night Furies. I have not seen other Baleful Banshees in years.\*\*"

\* \* \*

><p>In the morning, the riders flew off in search of Bork's Cave.<p>

"Let me get this straight," said Snotlout. "To find this island, we have to find Bork's cave?"

"His last known place of residence," Fishlegs corrected.

"Who would live in a cave?" Astrid asked.

"Who wouldn't?" Tuffnut countered.

Grim turned to Astrid. "Astrid, I have lived in a cave."

"But it was out of necessity, wasn't it?" Astrid asked. "You didn't have much of a choice."

Hiccup cut their conversation short. "There must be something in there about the Isle of Night and where we can find it."

"Bork's notes say his cave was cut into the mountains above Odin's Shield," Fishlegs supplied.

They looked ahead and saw an island with lots of mountains.

"Right there," said Hiccup. "This must be it."

They landed.

"Okay, so what are we looking for?" asked Tuffnut.

"It's a cave," Astrid said, annoyed with Tuffnut's stupidity. "Look for a big opening in the side of a mountain."

"Hole, check," said Tuffnut.

"Mountain, on it," said Ruffnut.

Astrid turned to Hiccup. "You know, we don't have to bring them every time."

There was a horrible sound, like a dragon dying. Everyone covered their ears.

Fishlegs and Meatlug flew over to Snotlout and Hookfang.

"What in the world was that?" Fishlegs asked.

"That is a Changewing call, my friend," said Snotlout, leaning his arm on Hookfang's horn. "Surprised you didn't know that."

"I would have if it sounded like one," said Fishlegs. "This is a Changewing." Fishlegs cupped his hands to his mouth and let out a screaming roar.

Snotlout scoffed. "Bet you can't do a Thunder Drum."

"Please," said Fishlegs. "At least challenge me."

Meatlug landed and Fishlegs stood up in the saddle and cleared his throat. He opened his mouth and let out a growling roar.

Everyone covered their ears and yelled at Fishlegs to stop.

"Enough, Fishlegs!" Hiccup yelled over the sound. "That's good."

Fishlegs stopped and looked utterly pleased with himself.

On the other hand, Grim was not. "If you do that again, I will throw you into the ocean," he threatened Fishlegs with a glare.

Fishlegs cowered on Meatlug's back.

Hiccup pointed through the mountains. "Hey, I found an opening."

The space was too narrowed for the most of the dragons to fly through so the dragons walked.

"That Bork was a dweeb," said Snotlout, "but, boy, he could climb

like a mountain goat."

There was a loud roar.

Grim whirled around on Deathshriek's back. "Fishlegs, what did I tell you?" he said darkly.

"Actually, that wasn't me," said Fishlegs. "Mine's far more authentic."

There was another loud roar and a purple Thunder Drum flew into view.

"You want to tell that to him!" yelled Astrid.

The dragons took off.

"Head for the cave!" yelled Hiccup.

They flew to where they thought the opening was.

"Wait, what cave?" asked Ruffnut.

"We just saw it!" Astrid cried. "There was a hole!"

"Yeah," said Tuffnut. "Now the hole's gone."

The Thunder Drum dive bombed them.

Hiccup ducked to stay on Toothless. "Snotlout, Ruff, and Tuff, you look for the opening. We'll lure the Thunder Drum away."

They split up.

"Fishlegs, Grim, Thunder Drum call!" Hiccup shouted.

"Wish you would make up your mind," Fishlegs said.

"Fishlegs!" Hiccup yelled, exasperated.

Fishlegs and Grim roared their Thunder Drum calls.

The Thunder Drum turned and started following them.

The twins head-butted the rock face and knocked themselves out.

"It was right here," said Snotlout. He started beating on the rock with his fists. "I swear it was."

There was a growl and a red Changewing appeared beside Snotlout.

Snotlout let out a cry. "Oh, no!"

The Changewing grabbed Snotlout by the behind and flew up with him to the higher rocks.

"Hey! Put me down!" screamed Snotlout. "Hookfang!"

The Monstrous Nightmare flew towards them.

"Way to go, Hookfang!" Snotlout cheered.

Hookfang flew in front of them and lit himself on fire. He breathed fired, just missing Snotlout.

"Go away, Hookfang!" Snotlout ordered.

Hookfang flew away.

The Thunder Drum was chasing Fishlegs and Meatlug in circles. "A little help here!" he yelled to Hiccup, Astrid, and Grim.

The others were sitting on the rocks.

"Go see what you can find," Astrid said to Hiccup and Grim. "We'll keep this guy busy."

"What about Snotlout?" Hiccup asked, pointing at his cousin.

"Not feeling the trust!" they heard him yell faintly.

Astrid and Stormfly flew over to the twins. "Ruff! Tuff!"

"On it," Ruffnut said.

Tuffnut gave Astrid a thumbs-up.

"You're giving me the twins?" Snotlout cried.

The Changewing smacked Snotlout against the side of the cliff repeatedly.

"Okay, I'll take the twins," Snotlout said.

"Go!" yelled Astrid.

Toothless and Deathshriek flew into an opening they found.

"Careful, bud," Hiccup said to Toothless.

They continued back into the darkness.

"Bork's cave," Hiccup said. "This is it."

"We need to hurry," Grim said. "There can be other dragons here."

It was very dark as they continued on. Toothless and Deathshriek landed and their riders jumped off.

"There's got to be something here," said Hiccup.

Toothless lit a fire with a plasma blast.

"Thanks, bud," Hiccup said.

They looked around the cave.

"What is that?" Hiccup muttered.



Grim turned and looked up where Hiccup was looking. On the ceiling of the cave was a crude mural.

"It's a map," whispered Hiccup. "To the Isle of Night! We found it!" He pulled out his notebook and started copying. "I gotta get this down."

There was a large crash and several rocks fell.

"What was that?" Hiccup asked, looking around.

Grim was on high alert.

There was another crash. The fire Toothless lit went out and dust fell from the ceiling. The map cracked and began to fall apart.

"No, no, no, no, no, no!" Hiccup said, trying to get the map copy. "Come on! I need more time."

"We have to go," said Grim. "This whole place is coming down!"

Toothless and Deathshriek covered Hiccup and Grim with their wings. A large rock bounced off Toothless' wing.

"Got it!" said Hiccup.

"Let's go," said Grim.

More rocks came down and blocked the cave entrance.

"So this is just great," Hiccup said, kneeling next to Toothless. "We're trapped and you can't use your shots without bringing the whole ceiling down."

Toothless warbled.

Hiccup turned to Grim. "Can Deathshriek do anything?"

"No," replied Grim. He was looking around frantically. "Deathshriek's fire is not enough to blast the rocks away."

Toothless opened his mouth wide and let out a high-pitched roar.

"Whoa, whoa, whoa!" said Hiccup. "What was that?"

Toothless put his ears up and listened. After tilting his ears several times he put his head between Hiccup's legs and pushed him back in the saddle. He let out the high-pitched roar again.

"\*\*Follow me,\*\*" Toothless said to Deathshriek.

Toothless took to the air. Grim jumped onto Deathshriek's back and held on tightly. Deathshriek followed Toothless, barely being able to see the Night Fury in the dark. The only part of Toothless he could make out was the red in his prosthetic tailfin.

"Where are you going?" Hiccup asked Toothless. "And how are you

seeing?"

Toothless continued making the strange roars.

The two dragons rounded a corner and saw sunlight. They flew out of the cave just as the exit caved in.

"Yes!" cheered Hiccup. "We got it. Thanks, bud."

Grim let out a sigh of relief.

They rejoined Astrid and Fishlegs.

"Someone call for backup?" Hiccup asked.

Astrid turned. "Hiccup! Grim! You made it!"

"Please, don't ask me how because I have no idea," Hiccup said.

"We've got this," said Astrid. "Go help Snotlout."

The brothers and their dragons flew over to where the Changewing was cuddling Snotlout on the high rocks. They landed across a gap in the rocks.

The Changewing bent down and grabbed a mouthful of dragon nip, chewed it, and spat it on Snotlout's head.

"Aw," said Hiccup to Snotlout. "You made a new friend."

"Yeah," said Snotlout. "It's not as friendly as it looks."

Toothless flew across the gap and fired a plasma blast.

The Changewing dropped Snotlout off the cliff.

"\*\*Hookfang, now!\*\*" Grim shouted down to the Nightmare.

Hookfang flew up and caught Snotlout.

"Now that's how you rescue somebody," Snotlout said as Hookfang gained altitude.

"Everything went exactly as we planned," said Tuffnut from the ground.

"Yeah, keep the Changewing busy until Hiccup and Grim show up," Ruffnut said.

They laughed and high-fived.

Astrid turned to Hiccup and Grim. "I still can't believe you survived that cave-in."

"Neither can I," said Hiccup. "I mean, it was all Toothless. He sent out this weird sound, it bounced back towards us, and somehow he used it to find his way out."

Fishlegs and Meatlug flew up beside Astrid and Stormfly.

"I don't get it," said Fishlegs. "How can you use sound to guide you?"

"I do it all the time," Snotlout called from Hookfang as they caught up. "When I hear your voice, I go the other way." He laughed and flew ahead of them.

"So did you find anything?" asked Astrid.

"Only a map," Hiccup said simply, "to the Isle of Night."

"Nice!" said Astrid. "When do we leave?"

"First thing in the morning," Hiccup replied. He rubbed Toothless' head. "By this time tomorrow, bud, you are going to be knee-deep in Night Furies."

Toothless gave a roar and flipped in the air.

In the evening, Hiccup was going over Bork's notes again. Grim was asleep in his bed and Deathshriek was curled on his slab.

"It says there's a reason why there's only Night Furies on that island," said Hiccup.

Toothless came over to him and warbled.

"You guys aren't so friendly with other dragons," said Hiccup.

Toothless let out a louder warble.

"It says, 'Herds of Night Furies can be extremely hostile to other species,'" Hiccup read. He looked up from the notes. "If the other kids come with me on their dragons."

Hiccup closed the journal and got up from his desk. "Well, looks like it's just you and me, bud."

Toothless grunted and looked at Grim and Deathshriek.

"They'll understand," said Hiccup. "Let's go."

Hiccup grabbed his bag, some food, and some water. He glanced over at Grim. "Sorry, Grim."

Hiccup and Toothless left the room.

From his bed, Grim opened one blue eye.

Outside, Hiccup made sure the front door was closed. He climbed up on Toothless' back.

"Well, this is it, Toothless," said Hiccup. "We'll finally get to see you're not alone."

He clicked his prosthetic into the pedal and opened the tailfin. Toothless was in the air with one beat of his wings. They flew over the ocean in the direction the map said to go.

"Next stop the Isle of Night," said Hiccup.

\* \* \*

><p>Hiccup and Toothless followed the map to the Isle of Night. "It should take us until morning to reach it." He patted Toothless' head. "You must be excited."<p>

Toothless warbled.

"Give me one good reason why I should not turn back now and tell Stoick what you are doing?"

Hiccup yelped as Grim and Deathshriek appeared beside them. "What if it was your family? Wouldn't you want only a few people there? Besides, Bork wrote that Night Furies are territorial."

"\*\*Is that true?\*\*" Grim called over to Toothless.

"\*\*Yes. You see how protective I am over Hiccup,\*\*" Toothless replied.

"All right. But you are not going alone," said Grim.

"You can't," said Hiccup. "Night Furies are hostile to other dragon species."

"Hiccup," Grim warned.

Hiccup groaned. "What, are you going to go back and get the others?"

"No, that would a waste of time and energy," Grim answered. He smiled. "The four of us will be fine as long as we stay together."

They flew in silence for a short while.

"You do know Astrid will come after you with her axe for this," Grim said.

Hiccup groaned again. "Ah, great."

They flew all night and in the morning they landed on the Isle of Night.

"If Bork was right, you're going to love this," Hiccup said to Toothless.

"\*\*Yes,\*\*" said Toothless. He bounded forward.

Grim and Deathshriek followed closely behind them.

"\*\*Something does not feel right,\*\*" said Deathshriek.

"\*\*What is it?\*\*" Grim asked.

"\*\*I don't know,\*\*" Deathshriek answered. "\*\*Be on your guard.\*\*"

Toothless stopped at the top of a large hill.

"Are you ready?" Hiccup asked him.

Toothless warbled the affirmative.

"Okay. Here it goes." Hiccup cupped his hands to his mouth and howled like a Night Fury.

The four of them waited.

A soft roar answered them.

"I can't believe it," said Hiccup.

Toothless let out a cry of his own and was answered once again.

"Hiccup," Grim said quietly. He was beginning to understand what Deathshriek meant.

A black head popped up from the rocks.

"Bork was right!" Hiccup said excitedly. He got off Toothless. "Go get him, Toothless."

Toothless jumped from the hill and turned back to look at Hiccup.

"It's okay," said Hiccup. "Go, go. We're right behind you."

Grim stepped up beside Hiccup. Behind him was Deathshriek.

Toothless made his way over to the dragon, the brothers and Deathshriek finding another way down.

Hiccup, Grim, and Deathshriek kept their distance from Toothless. Toothless was looking for the dragon.

Hiccup looked around. "Something's not right."

"Yeah," said Grim.

Hiccup cupped his hands to his mouth. "Toothless, come back."

Toothless turned around. A bola wrapped around his legs.

"Toothless!" yelled Hiccup, running forward. He was tackled by a large Viking. From behind, he heard Deathshriek roaring and Grim snarling as they wrestled with their own attackers.

Hiccup looked up and saw an unfriendly familiar face. "Alvin."

Two other Outcasts wheeled over a Night Fury decoy.

"Amazingly realistic, wouldn't you say, 'Iccup?" Alvin asked.

"Release us! Now!" snarled Grim.

Deathshriek opened his mouth and screamed, trying to give the others a chance to escape. He was hit in the head by an Outcast with a hammer.

"Deathshriek!" cried Grim.

Toothless struggled and snarled as three Outcasts restrained him.

"Let go of him!" Hiccup ordered, struggling. When he found it was no use, he looked up at Alvin. "What do you want?"

"I want me own dragon trainer," replied Alvin. "And by the looks of it, I've got 'im."

"I am not going to train your dragons, Alvin," Hiccup said.

Alvin chuckled. "I think you will. And once you 'ave, I'll use them to destroy Berk."

"And knowing what you'll do with them, what makes you believe he will train them?" Grim growled.

Alvin turned to Grim. "Oh, 'e does speak. I thought you didn't 'ave a voice of your own, lad. Take 'em!"

The Outcasts yanked Hiccup and Grim to their feet.

"I don't understand," said Hiccup. "How did you do this?"

The Outcasts wrestled the two dragons and resisting riders into a ship. Savage gave Hiccup a good kick and sent him sprawling next to Toothless' head. He stepped aside to reveal an old man and a sheep walking up the gangplank.

"Mildew?" Hiccup asked with a frown. "What are you doing here?"

"Ah, look at you," said Mildew. "The brightest boy on the island and yet, here you are, trapped by a silly old man and his sheep."

"How could you do this?" Hiccup asked, horrified.

"You did it, Hiccup," said Mildew. "You believed our Bork notes, you followed the map we drew you, walked right into our trap, all for the love of a dragon. Maybe you'll think twice next time about where you place your loyalties."

Grim went into a full dragon rage. "You loathsome, guts of an eel traitor!" he roared, fighting against the two Outcasts. "When I get through with you, you evil old man, there will be nothing left for Stoick the Vast to deal with."

Alvin punched Grim across the face. Grim let out a small cry, but silenced himself. Blood dripped down from his nose. Alvin grabbed a fistful of Grim's black hair and yanked him up to look in him the face.

"Never speak that name in front of me again," Alvin said dangerously.

Grim said nothing, but stared at Alvin defiantly.

Alvin threw Grim back on the deck. The Outcast chief laughed evilly. "Raise the sails! We're headed home, to Outcast Island."

Hiccup and Grim looked at Alvin in defiance.

The ship began to sail back to Outcast Island.

\* \* \*

><p><strong>Ladies and gentlemen, Grim is angry. This is not going to end well for someone.<strong>

## 2. Chapter 2

\*\*I decided to give you a second chapter to last you the weekend. I'll see everyone next week when I get back from vacation. As always, review at the end and see if you can guess what the next installment of this series will crossover with. I'm curious to see if anyone will guess the right answer before I post the announcement, which will be in a few weeks. Will this challenge be accepted?\*\*

\* \* \*

><p>The trip to Outcast Island was a tense one. Hiccup kept looking at Grim. Grim was quiet, his blue eyes burning. Hiccup knew the first chance Grim got, he was going to attack the Outcasts and Mildew. Hiccup was actually concerned for Mildew. The old man had no chance against Grim, especially with Grim so angry.<p>

Hiccup also noted Grim's face was turning several shades of purple and black. His nose must have been broken when Alvin hit him. Both eyes had blackened and were swollen. Blood was still dripping from his nose.

"Grim," Hiccup whispered. "Are you okay?"

"No," whispered Grim. "He broke my nose. I won't be able to properly speak Dragonese."

"Oh, great," muttered Hiccup.

Savage hit Hiccup in the back. "Shut up."

Grim turned around and frowned.

Hiccup was sure that if he could, Grim would be snarling. It looked to him that it was painful just for Grim to narrow his eyes.

When they reached Outcast Island, the dragons and the riders were separated. Hiccup and Grim had their hands bound in front of them.

Alvin and Savage led both boys into a dungeon underground. Cages were built into the rock, each housing a wild dragon. A Nadder slammed

against its cage as the four of them walked by.

"Where are our dragons, Alvin?" Hiccup said calmly. "Where's Toothless?"

"You'll see 'em soon enough," said Alvin. "Don't you worry."

"You know, I have to admit luring me and Toothless to the Isle of Night, building a fake Night Fury, not bad."

Alvin chuckled. "Not bad says the one legged boy in manacles."

"But turning Mildew into an Outcast?" Hiccup continued. "Using him against us? Come on, Alvin, that's low hanging fruit, even for you."

Savage laughed.

Alvin punched Savage in the head. "No one thinks you're funny, boy. Now get movin'." Alvin gave Hiccup a shove.

They kept walking.

A hissing growl caught there attention. They turned to see four Outcasts trying to keep a Whispering Death from escaping through the floor.

Hiccup looked over his shoulder at Alvin. "You know it's going to keep doing that, right? It is a Whispering Death."

Savage shoved Hiccup.

Grim gave the dragon a look of sympathy. He wished he could tell it how to get out, but not with a broken nose and not with the Outcasts holding Hiccup hostage.

There was a lapping sound from the next cage they passed. A Scauldron was drinking out of a water trough. It looked up at Hiccup and Grim and spat boiling water at them. Hiccup and Grim ducked out of the way and the water hit an Outcast guard.

"A Scauldron," said Hiccup, looking back at the large dragon. "Impressive. You might want to cut back its water."

"Oy, write that down," Alvin said in a low voice to Savage.

They looked at the Scauldron. It turned to them and growled. They quickly moved away from the cage to avoid getting burned.

Several Outcast guards ran into a cage.

"It's escaped again!" said an Outcast.

"Actually, no," said Hiccup. "It's right behind you. Changewing."

The Mystery Class dragon appeared and spat acid at them. The bars of the cage kept it from hitting Hiccup and Grim.

"Wow, you guys really don't have a handle on these dragons, do



you?"

Alvin took Hiccup by the shoulders and turned him to him. "Well, that's why you're 'ere! Welcome to your new job, 'Iccup."

They started walking to another cage.

"Uh, job?" said Hiccup. "Me? As inviting as that sounds, I'm going to have to pass."

"'Iccup, 'Iccup, 'Iccup! Why do you 'ave to make things so difficult?" asked Alvin.

"Really not the first time I've been asked that question," said Hiccup.

They stopped in front of a cage. At the back was a black dragon that was tied up in such a way he couldn't move.

"Toothless!" cried Hiccup.

Toothless opened his eyes and struggled against his bonds.

"Hang in there, bud," said Hiccup. "I'll get you out."

"'E's not goin' anywhere," said Alvin. "Neither are you. You will help me train these dragons."

"And if I don't?" asked Hiccup.

"Well, then they're no good to me," said Alvin. "None of them. Especially yours."

Hiccup looked at Toothless. He had very little choice.

Alvin turned back to Grim. "Now where are my manners? I've forgotten all about you, boy. 'Ow's your face?"

Grim glared.

"Stings, don't it?" taunted Alvin. "I guess you want to see your dragon. Let's see 'im."

Alvin grabbed Grim by the scruff of the neck and steered him over to the next cage. Deathshriek was tied up in a similar fashion.

"\*\*Grim! Are you all right?\*\*" Deathshriek said, his voice muffled by the muzzle.

Grim gave him a small smile.

"Savage, escort our guests to their rooms," chortled Alvin.

Savage grabbed them both and gave them hard shoves in down another tunnel. When they reached their room, which was a dungeon cell, Savage decided to torment them.

"Can I get you anything?" he asked. "Food? A cozy blanket? Some warm yak milk?" He opened the cell door and shoved the boys in. The cell

door was slammed behind them. Savage laughed. "Yak milk." He walked away.

"How are you feeling?" Hiccup asked Grim.

"I'll be fine," said Grim, gently wiping some blood from his mouth. "We need to figure out a way to save our dragons and escape."

Hiccup inspected the door. "I don't think either of us can slip through these bars."

"Do you have any tools?" asked Grim.

"Yeah." Hiccup pulled out a tool he used to make quick adjustments to Toothless' tail. He ran over to the lock. "If I can get the pop the lock, you can force the door open. Keep a lookout for me."

Grim gave a grunt and went over to the cell door to watch for anyone come down the tunnels.

A few minutes later, they heard voices. Hiccup quickly hid his tool and got away from the door. It was Alvin, Savage, and Mildew, his sheep under one arm, coming down the tunnel.

"Alvin, I gave you what you wanted," said Mildew. "We had a deal!"

"I didn't like that deal," said Alvin. "So I changed it."

They looked over at Hiccup.

"Oh, I believe you two know each other," said Savage. "Don't get too chummy." He shoved Mildew into a cell. "Mildew's hours are numbered, much like you and your dragons."

Alvin walked into the cell and snatched the sheep from Mildew.

"No!" cried Mildew. "What are you doing with me Fungus?"

"Preparing your final meal," replied Alvin. "It's lamb."

Savage slammed the cell door once Alvin was clear.

Mildew ran to the door and reached one hand through the bars. "Fungus! No!"

Alvin scoffed. "Berkians. Still as dumb as the day I left."

Mildew started crying. "What have I done?"

Hiccup and Grim leaned against the bars of their cell.

"We have to get out," said Hiccup.

"Any ideas?" asked Grim.

"I can't get lock open," said Hiccup. He looked down at the floor. "Do what the Whispering Death did?"

"Neither of us can dig like them," said Grim. "What other choice do

we have?"

Hiccup grabbed a rock and started using it to dig a hole. Grim used his hands, not caring about his fingers.

"Really, this is so hard to watch," Mildew said from his cell.

Hiccup stopped. "What now?" he asked Mildew.

"I always thought Stoick raised a smarter boy than this," said Mildew. "You'll never save your dragons by sitting in a cell digging in the dirt. You need to go get him. And soon."

Grim jumped up and rushed the cell door. "And how do you suggest we do that?" he hissed.

"By giving Alvin what he wants," said Mildew.

Grim's face twisted into a painful snarl. "Are you suggesting we give in and teach Alvin how to train dragons? I know you hate Berk, but do you hate life? He will destroy everything and everyone!" He slammed his fist on the bars for emphasis.

"No," said Hiccup. "He's right, Grim." A sly smile crossed his face. "Let's give Alvin what he wants."

Blue eyes lit up with understanding. "Clever."

\* \* \*

><p>They were sitting down there for hours. It could have been days for all they knew. Hiccup needed to make this believable. Also, Grim had to be ready to fight. He was resting in the corner.<p>

"Do you think you can use Dragonese at all?" Hiccup asked.

"A little," Grim replied. "It will hurt, but I think I can manage a few dialects. Nothing that relies on me snorting."

No one came down the tunnel for a long time.

Hiccup heard someone coming. He ran to the cell door and removed his prosthetic, hiding it behind his back. "Guard, guard!" he called. "I can't take it anymore. I'll tell Alvin what he wants to know. Just let me out of here."

"You little traitor!" yelled Grim from his place on the other side of the cell. "How could I call you my brother?"

The guard opened the door. When he did, Hiccup hit him in the head with his prosthetic. The force knocked the Outcast across the tunnel into the bars of Mildew's cell. However, it did not knock him out. He rubbed his chin and gave a growl.

"That worked a little better in my mind," said Hiccup.

Grim jumped up and raced to Hiccup's aid.

Mildew put his staff through the bars and grabbed the Outcast with

it. He jerked hard and Outcast hit his head hard enough on the bars to knock him out. The key slid across the tunnel floor.

Hiccup reached down and picked it up. "Whoa. Thanks."

He and Grim left their cell and started running.

"Wait!" yelled Mildew. "Take me with you."

Hiccup and Grim looked at each other and then to Mildew.

"You're kidding me, right?" Hiccup asked.

"No!" Mildew replied. "I know how to get around this island. I can help you, Hiccup. Please. Let me make it up to you."

Grim put his hand on Hiccup's shoulder. "We can't trust him," he whispered.

Hiccup growled and walked over to Mildew's cell. "Don't make me regret this, Mildew," he said, unlocking the cell. He stepped away and the door swung open.

Mildew stepped out.

Grim reached out and grabbed Mildew by the arm. "Cross us again and I will demonstrate how a Baleful Banshee hunts on you."

Mildew nodded.

The three of them ran down the tunnel. They left the dungeon and got outside. They ducked behind some rocks.

"Okay," said Hiccup. "What's the quickest way to get to Toothless and Deathshriek?"

Mildew pointed with his staff. "Through that lava field."

They had a long way to go to get to their dragons.

"Let's go," said Hiccup.

Mildew swung his staff in front of Hiccup to block him. "Wait. You do realize those are wild dragons down there."

"Yep." Hiccup ran for the lava field.

Grim turned to Mildew. "Who did you think I lived with for two years?" He followed Hiccup.

They crossed the lava field and came across a bunch of wild dragons. A Nightmare and a Nadder were fighting over a bone. Two Gronkles were also getting into an argument.

Hiccup climbed over a ledge of rock. "Well, come on then, let's go."

"Uh, let's not," said Mildew.

Grim sighed and shook his head, following Hiccup. "We know what we're

doing, Mildew. Stay behind us."

The boys ran ahead.

"Oh, perfect," said Mildew following them. "A ninety pound boy and a boy who thinks he's a dragon are my human shields." He tripped and fell on his face. "Perfect."

The three of them approached the dragons. The dragons looked up at them. They walked passed an orange and blue Nadder. The Nadder jumped up and blocked their path. Mildew raised his staff to fight it off.

"No, Mildew!" Hiccup took the staff away from him and threw it on the ground. "The last thing you want to do is threaten him."

"Me? Threaten him?" cried Mildew, gesturing to the dragon.

"We have to show him he can trust us," said Hiccup.

He slowly approached the Nadder, staying out of his blind spot. "It's okay. We're not here to hurt you." He touched the Nadder's leg. "That's it, fella."

The Nadder calmed down.

Mildew picked up his staff. "Very impressive."

The Nadder roared at Mildew. He jumped forward and began to circle him.

"It's okay," Hiccup said. "He's just getting to know you. They can sense fear, so be relaxed."

Mildew stood perfectly still and stiff as a board. "This is relaxed," he said through gritted teeth.

The Nadder growled in Mildew's ear.

Hiccup shook his head. "See? He wants to be friends. Isn't that nice?"

"Got plenty of friends," Mildew said quickly, jumping away from the Nadder.

Grim rolled his eyes. "We're going to need a way to get passed the guards. I can do it myself, but I cannot free Toothless and Deathshriek alone."

"You thinking what I'm thinking?" Hiccup asked him.

Grim's lips twitched. "Yes." He turned to the Nadder, glad they relied on chirps as a form of communication. "\*\*\*Would you mind helping us free our friends from the Outcasts?\*\*\*"

The Nadder chirped. "\*\*\*If it means me getting to burn some of their smelly butts, I'm all for it.\*\*\*"

"I'll take that as a yes," said Hiccup.

The Nadder licked Mildew. Mildew groaned in disgust.

Grim laughed. "He really likes you."

Mildew glared at Grim. "Shut up."

Hiccup had his hand on the Nadder's nose. "Remember," he said to Mildew, "dragon training begins and ends with trust. Both of yours."

Hiccup took Mildew's hand and put it up to the Nadder. Mildew was a little reluctant, but petted the Nadder.

"Well, climb on," said Hiccup.

"Huh?" said Mildew.

Hiccup hopped up on the Nadder's back.

Mildew followed him over. He jumped up, but couldn't get on. He switched the hand he was holding his staff with and this time he was able to get on the dragon's back.

"Wow," said Hiccup. "Mildew on a dragon. This is going to take some getting used to."

The Nadder chose that moment to start writhing.

"Why's he doing that? What's happening?" Mildew asked, trying to stay on.

"It's okay. It's okay," said Hiccup. "He's just never had people on him before." He spat into his hand. "A dragon's hide is dry. The moisture from your hands will soothe him." He rubbed the spit on the Nadder.

The Nadder made a happy sound.

Mildew spat in his hand and rubbed the Nadder.

The Nadder took off.

Mildew held onto Hiccup for dear life.

"Okay, you know there's a lot of dragon here, Mildew," said Hiccup. "Why don't you grab some of that?"

"Oh? Wha? I'm fine," said Mildew.

From the ground, Grim shook his head. He looked over some of the other dragons who were watching. "\*\*\*Will one of you please give me a lift? I need to find my friend.\*\*"

Hiccup and Mildew rode the Nadder to where the Outcasts kept the dragons.

Hiccup pointed. "That's where they're keeping Toothless and Deathshriek."

"Then let's go get them."

They looked behind them and saw Grim riding a yellow Nadder.

The Nadders dove into the tunnels and to where the riders' dragons were being kept. Hiccup and Grim had the Nadder's land and they jumped off their backs and ran over to the cages. Mildew fell off the Nadder and followed them at a slower pace.

"Toothless is gone," said Hiccup.

"So is Deathshriek," Grim added.

Mildew walked over to Hiccup. "Bah, Alvin must have moved them."

The cages doors opened to let out the Scauldron, Changewing, and Whispering Death.

The Nadders moved behind the Vikings.

"Let's see what you can do with some real wild dragons, 'Iccup," Alvin said from above the cages.

They looked at the dragons.

Hiccup set his features in a determined look. "Mildew, whatever happens in the next minute, do exactly what I tell you."

The Changewing spat acid at them. They ducked out of the way.

"I'm all ears," Mildew said.

They got on their Nadders as the dragons spat acid and boiling water at them. From his place above the cages, Alvin laughed.

The Whispering Death buried underground.

"At least that one's gone," said Mildew.

"Well, not for long," said Hiccup.

The Nadder jumped back as the ground beneath them was turned into mole tracks.

"Changewings shoot acid," Hiccup continued, "Scauldrons fire boiling water, and Whispering Deaths hunt from underground."

The Nadders ran for the exit, the three wild dragons chasing after them. The Nadders jumped in the air at the same time and the three dragons ran into each other. The Nadders soared out of the tunnels into daylight. They landed across the lava field.

"You sure know your dragons, I'll give you that," Mildew said to Hiccup.

"Hiccup! Grim!"

Stoick and Gobber were riding Thornado. The Thunder Drum landed and Stoick jumped off.

"Oh, thank Thor, you're all right," Stoick said.

"We're fine," said Hiccup, jumping off the Nadder. "But Toothless and Deathshriek are in trouble."

Tuffnut came over to Hiccup. "And Mildew is on the back of your dragon," he said in a low voice.

"I know," said Hiccup.

Tuffnut paused. "Weird."

Mildew grumbled. He was violently pulled off by Gobber.

"I should run you through right now!" Gobber shouted, raising his mallet arm.

Hiccup threw up his hands. "Gobber! Gobber, no!"

Gobber turned to Hiccup and paused his imminent bludgeoning of Mildew.

"He helped us escape," said Hiccup. He turned to Stoick. "Dad, I owe Mildew my life."

Gobber threw Mildew down. Everyone stared at Hiccup in astonishment.

"Getting weirder," said Tuffnut.

"You have no idea," Grim said.

"I'll explain later," said Hiccup. "Right now, I have to get to Toothless."

"And I need to find Deathshriek," said Grim. "I thought he would be flying around looking for us. I'm worried something happened to him. We have to find them."

Astrid spoke up, "Or bring them to you."

Grim and Hiccup nodded to her. They walked over to the edge of the rocks they were on. Both boys put their hands to their mouths and let out their dragon calls.

Seconds later they got a reply. They jumped back onto their dragons and took to the air.

"There they are!" Hiccup called happily.

They landed and Hiccup and Grim jumped off of their Nadders.

"Toothless!" Hiccup called.

The Night Fury tackled Hiccup and nuzzled him.

Deathshriek rushed Grim and licked him.

"Are you okay, bud?" Hiccup asked. "I am so sorry. This is all my fault."



"\*\*I'm sorry I got you into this,\*\*" Grim said to Deathshriek.

"\*\*Say nothing,\*\*" said Deathshriek. "\*\*This is not your fault.\*\*"

The two dragons turned and growled threateningly.

"What's the matter, bud?" Hiccup asked.

"'Ey there! Boy!" Alvin called from a top of a cliff. "You weren't going to leave before we finished our business, were you? That's what I would expect from Stoick's little runt."

"Oh, boy," said Gobber.

Stoick turned to Hiccup. "Hiccup!"

Hiccup glared at Alvin.

Alvin chuckled.

Hiccup jumped onto Toothless' back and took off.

"Hiccup, no!" Stoick called. "We got what we came for!"

"Do it, boy!" taunted Alvin, wielding his wicked looking axe. "I'm right 'ere! Now!"

Several Outcasts threw bolas and tied up Toothless and Hiccup. They hit the ground hard and rolled. The Outcasts ran to capture them.

"He's down!" yelled Gobber.

Astrid took charge. "Dragons, everybody!"

They turned around and the dragons were gone.

"Uh, we love to, but, as you can see," said Tuffnut.

"Trusting dragons," grumbled Mildew. "This is what it gets you."

"Wait!" cried Astrid. "Look."

The dragons were in the air and descending on the Outcasts. They fired at the Outcasts, keeping them away from Toothless and Hiccup.

"Yeah!" cheered Tuffnut. "We taught them that." He turned to his twin. "We didn't teach them that, did we? I didn't think so."

Meatlug surrounded Toothless and Hiccup in a ring of lava. Hookfang and Stormfly lifted them out of the ring and flew them to safety. Gobber and Snotlout cut the ropes to the bolas, freeing them.

"What happened?" Hiccup asked Astrid.

"The dragons saved you on their own," said Fishlegs.

"Looks like they took their training to a whole new level," said Astrid.

"We can catch up later," said Stoick. "Right now we need to get out of here."

More Outcasts were coming at them.

They jumped up on their dragons.

Thornado fired a sonic blast at the Outcasts to get them out of their way.

Gobber were riding the orange and blue Nadder. Mildew had slid off and was holding on to the Nadder by the tail.

"Ah, for the love of Thor!" said Gobber. "Get back up here!"

Mildew's hand slipped.

"Don't you let go, old man," Gobber said.

Mildew looked up at Gobber. "Tell the boys I'm sorry." He let go.

"Mildew!" screamed Hiccup. He turned Toothless around.

Mildew landed in some dead trees before hitting the ground. Outcasts surrounded him and one grabbed him.

"Go, Hiccup!" Mildew yelled at him. "You have to leave me!"

Two Outcasts fired their crossbows at Toothless.

Stoick and Thornado swooped over them. "He's right, son. We can't help him now."

\* \* \*

><p>Back home, Hiccup looked at the fake map. "I'm sorry this map wasn't the real thing, bud." He threw the map into the fire. He walked over to the table and picked up the Book of Dragons. "But hey, there's nothing wrong with being one of a kind, right?"<p>

Grim smiled. He looked at Deathshriek who had a smile of his own on his face. "Not at all," Grim said.

The door opened to reveal an annoyed Astrid. "Would you two come on?"

The boys looked at her blankly.

"Bork Week," said Astrid. "The parade."

They ran out before they were late.

The dragons flew over the town. Hiccup and Grim looked down and saw Stoick looking up at them with a smile.

\* \* \*

><p>"<em>A family isn't just something you're born into. It's also the friends who stood with you. The ones who fought by your side. You know you'll be there for them and they'll be there for you, for the battles that are yet to come."<em>

\* \* \*

><p><strong>How true that is and the Haddock family is going to learn that as they go. Next week will start the Defenders of Berk chapters. Hopefully this will keep you entertained until next week. Go ahead and review and see if you can answer my challenge. I am very interested in your guesses.<strong>

### 3. Chapter 3

\*\*I am back everyone. Thank for being so patient with me while I was on vacation. So now begins the Defenders of Berk season. So far only one person has taken a guess at my challenge so far. I'm sorry, DoctorWhoXX, the crossover will not be Eragon. Keep guessing, everyone. And review at the end of the chapter. I want to see how I am measuring up to the previous installments in the series. I'll announce what the series will be once I get up to Episode 15 or so in the Defenders of Berk series.\*\*

\*\*CHALLENGE: After this installment of the Dragon Trainer, Dragon Speaker series ends, I am doing another installment that will be a crossover. What story do you think I'll be crossing HTTYD with? Be warned, it is not an easy answer.\*\*

\*\*Previous answers: \*\*

\*\*Eragon\*\*

\* \* \*

><p>Fishlegs was tied up in a cave. He struggled to get free. "I won't talk. You can't make me."<p>

"Oh, I think we can," a raspy voice said.

The torches went out, plunging the cave into darkness.

"Hello?" he called, starting to panic. "Is anyone there? You can't leave me here in the dark! Okay, Hiccup is the leader of the Berk Dragon Academy. He rides a Night Fury named Toothless. Then there's Astrid. She's mean, but in a nice way. Her dragon is a Deadly Nadder, shoots spines, loves chicken. Snotlout rides a Monstrous Nightmare. We're not actually sure who's more monstrous, him or the dragon. And then there's the twins. They share a Zippleback, actually they fight over it. And then there's Grim. He can talk to dragons. He rides a Baleful Banshee, a dragon that can turn invisible and has a bloodcurdling scream."

There was a high-pitched scream and a plasma blast lit the torches.

The riders were looking at Fishlegs in disappointment. Meatlug and Toothless were on either side of Fishlegs.

"What?" cried Fishlegs. "You know I hate the dark!"

"Great. Fishlegs," Tuffnut scoffed. "More like Guppylegs. Oh, geez."

"Fishlegs, you can't cave in," said Hiccup. "Alvin will do a lot more than turn out the light to get you to talk. He had Grim and me locked in a dungeon ready to be executed. Toothless and Deathshriek were chained and muzzled for days. You need to stick with what we discussed: your name, where you live, and nothing else."

"All right, I'll work on it," said Fishlegs.

Astrid turned away. "Mean? I'm not mean."

Snotlout followed her. "It's okay, Astrid. I like mean girls."

"Ugh!" scoffed Astrid.

The others left, leaving Meatlug and Fishlegs in the dark.

"Hey, girl," said Fishlegs. "Can you untie me?"

Meatlug replied by licking his face and settling down for a nap.

"Please?" he begged.

\* \* \*

><p>"Grounded?" Hiccup and Grim said in unison when Stoick told them. They were down by the docks preparing the ships for battle if they needed to fight.<p>

"All the dragons?" Hiccup asked. "Are you serious?"

"Deadly serious," replied Stoick. "From this point forward there's a ban on flying. Period."

"What about patrolling?" asked Hiccup. "Training?"

"Deathshriek and I were going to go back to our island to see our friends," Grim said. "I promised we would go."

Toothless and Deathshriek looked at each other. Fearcloak gave a small cry of alarm from Grim's back.

"What part of ban on flight did you not understand?" Stoick asked them.

"That's ridiculous," said Hiccup.

"Absurdity at its zenith," Grim added.

Stoick turned to look at the work the other Vikings were doing. "I want that wall higher!" He turned back to his sons. "Are you calling

your father ridiculous and absurd?"

"Of course not," said Hiccup. "I would never call my father ridiculous. I'm calling my chief ridiculous."

From behind the dragons, a support beam fell over, sending them scurrying. A Viking went to retrieve it, but left it when he saw the Haddock family having an argument.

"Careful, sons," said Stoick. "You too, dragons." He turned and continued his way up the docks. "Put your backs into it, boys."

Hiccup and Grim followed.

"Dad, Alvin has his own dragons," Hiccup continued. "Changewings, Scauldrons, Whispering Deaths, I saw them." He gestured to Grim. "We saw them with our own eyes."

"Yes," said Stoick, turning back to them. "When you were kidnapped and locked up in an Outcast prison."

"He's also read the Book of Dragons," Hiccup pressed. He ran in front of Stoick to force him to stop walking. "He's seen Astrid train a Monstrous Nightmare. And he still has Mildew, who, by the way, I really doubt will hold up under questioning."

"Hiccup," said Stoick.

Hiccup cut him off. "If Alvin learns how to train his dragons and he attacks with them, our only chance is to fight back with ours."

Stoick put his hands on Hiccup's shoulders. "I understand that. But I'm not going to risk your life, Grim's life, or the lives of any of your dragon riders. This is my final word."

Stoick walked away.

"This is not good," said Grim.

Hiccup turned to Grim. "And why didn't you support me more?"

"I am in no condition to get into a shouting match with Stoick," said Grim, touching his nose carefully. The bruising had faded some on Grim's face and the swelling was down completely thanks to Gothi. He still reminded Hiccup of Deathshriek when he showed his white markings. "I will talk to him later. I may be able to talk some sense into him. You go to the Academy and tell the others about the ban and I'll try to talk to Stoick."

"Okay. Thanks, Grim." Hiccup ran off to the Academy, Toothless following him.

"\*\*No flying?\*" Fearcloak asked. "\*\*How are we going to keep all the dragons from flying? It's not good for them. We have wings for a reason. And I wasn't born to walk on the ground constantly.\*\*"

"\*\*I think you smaller dragons will have no trouble gliding low over town,\*\*" said Grim. He turned to Deathshriek. "\*\*I am sorry. I did

not know he would put a ban into place.\*\*"

"\*\*Better tell Axewing and Grindheart,\*\*" said Deathshriek. "\*\*I doubt Grindheart would care, but Axewing will be furious.\*\*"

Grim sighed. "\*\*I hope I'll be able to explain everything to them.\*\*" He touched his nose again.

"\*\*I will speak if it makes it easier for you,\*\*" Deathshriek said.

Grim gave a small nod.

The three of them went to find Axewing and Grindheart. They were hiding in a cave in the forest. Grindheart was deep in the cave's shadow while Axewing was basking in what little sunlight there was at the mouth of the cave.

Axewing heard them coming. "\*\*Grim, Deathshriek. Why are you not flying?\*"

"\*\*Stoick has put a ban on flight,\*\*" said Grim.

"\*\*What?\*" said Axewing. "\*\*He cannot! It will upset the natural order of everything! Dragons have wings to fly. What are we to do?\*"

"\*\*I will speak to Stoick later,\*\*" Grim promised. "\*\*He is in no mood to listen. My hope is that once he calms down, I'll be able to talk some sense into him.\*\*"

Fearcloak looked around Grim's head. "\*\*I'm not happy about this either.\*\*"

"\*\*No one is,\*\*" said Grim. "\*\*I needed to tell you before you go flying around.\*\*"

"\*\*Well, be quick about it,\*\*" Axewing hissed. "\*\*I am not scratching up my belly because some fool doesn't want us flying.\*\*"

Grim nodded. He climbed onto Deathshriek's back and Deathshriek walked back to the village. They found Thornado on the cliffs. The Thunder Drum looked like he wanted to fly. He also didn't have his saddle on.

"\*\*Thornado,\*\*" Grim addressed.

"\*\*Ah, young Grim,\*\*" Thornado rumbled. "\*\*How are you today?\*"

"\*\*We could be better,\*\*" Grim admitted. "\*\*Have you seen Stoick?\*"

"\*\*He is still down at the docks,\*\*" Thornado replied. He looked down. "\*\*See?\*"

Grim looked down and didn't only see Stoick, but heard him as well.

"\*\*What is Stoick thinking with grounding all of us?\*" Deathshriek

grumbled, looking at the Viking chief.

"\*\*He is looking out for Hiccup,\*\*" Thornado replied. "\*\*He is afraid Alvin will come after him again. I don't blame him. Hiccup is fragile. The boy looks like he'll break if you play too rough with him.\*\*"

"\*\*I can understand that,\*\*" said Grim. "\*\*But keeping him from flying isn't going to solve anything.\*\*"

"\*\*I know,\*\*" said Thornado. "\*\*But I cannot tell him that. You can, Grim.\*\*"

"\*\*Thank you, Thornado.\*\*"

Grim walked down the docks to talk to Stoick. "Stoick, I must speak with you."

Stoick sighed. "Not now, Grim. I'm busy."

"I believe the men can go a few minutes without you shouting orders at them," Grim said.

"This is about the dragons, isn't it?" Stoick said.

Grim nodded.

"I told you my decision was final," said Stoick.

"Stoick, banning the dragons from flying is not going to solve anything," said Grim. "It will only cause more trouble."

Stoick started to walk away and up to the house.

Grim followed. "How can grounding the dragons stop the Outcasts from coming? It will not. You are taking away Berk's first warning alarm and its defenses."

"Grim, you can argue all you want," said Stoick. "I am not changing my mind. If the dragons are grounded, the riders will be less likely to be hurt."

"Stoick, I have yet to begin to argue," said Grim.

By this time, they had reached the front door of the house. Thornado and Deathshriek were watching them with interest. Fearcloak clung to Grim's shirt.

"I am not a dragon you can teach to ride," said Stoick.

Grim and Stoick went inside.

"No, you are acting like an old stubborn dragon," said Grim, becoming aggravated. "You and Thornado are certainly a pair."

From outside the dragons were listening in.

"\*\*Hey!\*\*" Thornado barked indignantly.

"Hush!" Grim shouted out to Thornado. He turned back to Stoick. "I am

not saying this because I want to go on my trip. I am not saying this because I want to go flying. I am speaking for the dragons. This is not good for them."

For a few seconds, Grim thought he had gotten through to Stoick.

"I understand that you worry about the dragons," Stoick said.

Grim nodded.

"But I am trying to keep everyone, riders and dragons, safe," said Stoick.

Grim's face twisted into a dark look. "Stoick, the Vikings have always said a downed dragon is a dead dragon. Grounding them is hurting them, both physically and emotionally. Dragons have wings so they can fly. You do not know how damaging it can be to their spirits if they are not able to fly. On top of that, dragons like Axewing and Grindheart do not have legs to walk. Grindheart has no problem travelling using tunnels, but Axewing's body is not made for slithering on the ground. He needs to be able to fly."

"Grim, I am not changing my mind," said Stoick.

"Have you been listening to me?" Grim said, raising his voice.

"Have you been listening to me?" Stoick shot back, raising his voice as well.

"Yes, and it is the same old tune," Grim growled. "You are hurting the dragons!"

"I am the chief!" boomed Stoick. "You will listen to me!"

Fearcloak decided to leave. He jumped off of Grim's back and hurried out the door.

"\*\*They are really going at it in there,\*\*" Fearcloak said to Thornado and Deathshriek.

"\*\*Stoick is as stubborn as a Thunder Drum,\*\*" Thornado said proudly.

"\*\*And Grim is as strong as the winter is cold,\*\*" Deathshriek added.

"\*\*I guess we'll see who's stronger,\*\*" said Fearcloak.

It was an easy task listening in on them. Stoick and Grim were in a shouting match. Some people thought the dragons were fighting. The three dragons quietly watch from outside, listening to every word.

"Wow, they're really going at it," said Hiccup. He had walked over to see what all the noise was about.

Toothless looked at the group and sat down to watch the sun set. He wanted to go flying. Instead, Hiccup turned around and went to the forge.



It was past dusk when the shouting stopped. It ended with Grim slamming the front door and storming down the steps in a fury. It didn't match the one he unleashed at Mildew, but it was certainly close.

"\*\*Stoick one, Grim zero,\*\*" Fearcloak mumbled.

Grim heard and hissed at Fearcloak. He continued passed the dragons, grumbling angrily in what could have been Dragonese or another language.

Toothless decided to get up and moved. He walked over to Hiccup and hit him in the head with his tail.

"Ow! What?" Hiccup asked.

"\*\*You know what,\*\*" Toothless growled.

Hiccup turned back to what he was doing.

Toothless came up behind him and butted him in the back. "\*\*Let's go flying,\*\*" he demanded.

"Toothless, you have to relax." Hiccup pointed to a corner of the forge.

Toothless walked into the corner and sat down. "\*\*Come on, Hiccup. We do every night.\*\*" He perked up his ear fins and gave a gummy smile. "\*\*Please?\*\*"

Hiccup made a gesture for Toothless to lay down.

"\*\*Fine.\*\*" Toothless lay down and made an annoyed sound at Hiccup before turning away from him.

"Nice to have you in the shop, Hiccup," said Gobber, coming over with a sword. "Usually you and Toothless are out enjoying a beautiful evening flight around the island at this hour. Of course, you can't do that anymore, not with the ban on flying and all."

Hiccup stopped what he was doing and glared at Gobber.

"Eh, shame about that," Gobber said. "So, what are we making?"

Hiccup picked up what he was working on. It was a shield with Toothless painted on it.

Gobber was surprised. "All this work for a shield?"

"Well, it not just a shield," said Hiccup.

He activated a switch. The center hub opened up and shot out a grappling hook. It wrapped around Gobber and pulled Hiccup to him. There was an awkward moment of silence.

"Handy," Gobber commented.

Hiccup had the cable wind back into the shield and the hub closed. "If we can't ride the dragons, we have to defend ourselves somehow."

He put the shield back on the

"You know, Hiccup," said Gobber, "your father is just doing what's best for you. He's trying to keep you safe."

"I know," said Hiccup. "But the problem is the safest place for me is on Toothless."

Toothless let out a small warble.

"Well, I'll leave you to it," said Gobber. "I imagine you'll be here quite a while. Too bad really. Have you seen that moon? I can't imagine a more beautiful night for a flight."

Hiccup turned around from his shield and glared at Gobber.

"I did it again, didn't I?" said Gobber. He walked away.

When Hiccup turned back, Toothless was right in his face. He roared softly.

"Ugh!" Hiccup put his hand up to wave the stench of Toothless' breath away. "I know what you're thinking and you might as well forget it."

Toothless looked up at the moon.

Hiccup gazed up at the moon as well.

\* \* \*

><p>Grim was snarling and pacing.<p>

"\*\*You certainly make an impressive sight when you are angry, Grim,\*\*" Grindheart commented.

Axewing agreed. The young dragon speaker was dressed in his dragon scale clothes. With Fearcloak on his back, in the pale moonlight, Grim looked like a dragon.

"\*\*Don't be so upset,\*\*" Fearcloak said to Grim. "\*\*Stoick will come around.\*\*"

Grim hissed angrily and continued to pace. "\*\*He better come around soon before someone is hurt!\*\*" he said in Whispering Death dialect, a more hissing, rasping speech. His nose was throbbing from all the yelling had done and using the hissing speech gave him some reprieve.

Grim spent the rest of the night and most of the day out with the dragons in the forest. He caught his breakfast, a wild boar, on his own and had Deathshriek start a fire for him to roast the meat. After Grim had his fill, he gave the rest to Deathshriek, Grindheart, Axewing, and Fearcloak.

"Grim!"

Grim perked his head up at Hiccup's voice. Feeling more than a little agitated after his fight with Stoick, he decided to have a little fun.

Hiccup wandered the forest. "Grim!" he called again.

Hiccup was knocked to the ground and pinned. He looked up and saw Grim poised for attack.

"It's me! Don't kill me!" yelled Hiccup.

Grim got off of Hiccup and helped him to his feet. "I know."

"I need to talk to you," said Hiccup.

"Hiccup, if this is about what happened between Stoick and me last night, I will not apologize," Grim said. "I have done nothing wrong."

"I wasn't going to say anything about that," said Hiccup.

Grim was a little confused. "Then why did you come looking for me? I find it difficult to believe Stoick has reversed his decision about ban on flight."

"What would you say about joining Dragon Flight Club?" asked Hiccup.

"What?" Grim asked with a frown.

"Just meet me at the Dragon Academy," said Hiccup. "The others will meet us there. Oh, and don't tell anyone. The first rule of Dragon Flight Club is that there is no Dragon Flight Club."

Grim smirked.

\* \* \*

><p>At sunset, everyone met at the Academy.<p>

"Okay, Dragon Flight Club members," said Hiccup, pacing in front of the waiting dragon trainers. "You know why you're here."

"Huh! Speak for yourself," said Tuffnut.

Hiccup ignored him. "We need to be ready for riders on any type of dragon. From a Typhoomerang to a Scauldron to a Changewing, even a Whispering Death. So, I've put together some training exercises."

Snotlout interrupted by making a mocking sound. "Can we go already?"

Hookfang roared, eager to get off the ground.

Hiccup rolled his eyes. "Let's mount up. First stop, Changewing Island!"

They flew to the island where the Changewings lived. It was completely dark now, but there was a bright moon out.

"Oh, yeah!" said Tuffnut. "Stones of good fortune, a lifetime of good luck. I can't wait to get my hands on one of those."

"Tuffnut, we've been over this," Astrid called. "Those are not stones of good fortune. Those are dragon eggs."

"And leave them alone," Fishlegs added. "Please? I really don't want to revisit the Changewing debacle."

"You may have to, Fishlegs," said Grim, Deathshriek coming up along Meatlug's side. "From what I understand, you were very brave to stand your ground in front of four mother Changewings."

Fishlegs' face lit up. "You think so?"

"Certainly," Grim said with a nod of respect. "It takes a great amount of courage to face your fears, especially when they have teeth and claws and are able to swallow you in one bite."

"\*\*A Changewing could not possibly eat Fishlegs in one bite,\*\*" said Deathshriek.

Grim smiled.

The dragons swooped around and quickened their pace.

They arrived at the island. The trees were glowing with Changewing eggs.

"Certainly a sight to behold," Grim said, looking at the trees.

The dragons landed in some sturdy trees and watched a herd of boars. Now and then, a Changewing would appear and snarl and they separated one boar from the herd.

"Changewings hunt like wolves," said Hiccup. "One dragon lures a single boar from the herd."

"Then the other Changewings surround it," Fishlegs added.

The Changewings surrounded their boar.

"Hey!" Tuffnut said. "Don't we know that boar?"

"Yeah, we do," said Ruffnut. "That's Bjorn Boar."

"Are they serious?" Astrid said.

Tuffnut pointed a finger at the Changewings. "You leave Bjorn alone!"

"Clearly they are," Hiccup said.

The Changewings were looking up at them.

"You're on your own, Bjorn!" Tuffnut said.

The Changewings began firing acid in their direction. The riders took off and flew through the trees. The acid blasts eroded through tree trunks and trees fell in front of them.

"Keep your distance!" Hiccup yelled. "Their acid is only effective at

close range!"

"Not very comforting when you're on the slowest dragon!" Fishlegs yelled. He whimpered to Meatlug. "Sorry, girl. It had to be said."

"There's too many of them!" Snotlout shouted. "And they come out of nowhere!"

Grim looked up at the sky. "If they have nothing to camouflage against, they will not have the advantage!"

"Up! Up!" Astrid commanded Stormfly.

The dragons climbed into the sky. Stormfly shot spines and Toothless used his plasma blasts at the Changewings.

"What did I say about the Changewing debacle?" Fishlegs called. "Was no one listening?"

\* \* \*

><p>Hiccup and Grim slept late the next morning. Hiccup only got up when Toothless started jumping on the roof and demanding a ride. Grim stayed in bed, his dragon more than content to sleep a bit more himself.<p>

When Grim did get up, Fearcloak jumped on his favorite trainer's back, his talons digging into Grim's pale skin.

"\*\*Easy, Fearcloak. I don't have my dragon scale tunic on yet,\*\*" Grim grimaced in pain slightly.

Fearcloak arranged his wings so they were wrapped around Grim's shoulders instead of having the talons digging into his bare shoulders.

"\*\*Are you going to let me get dressed?\*\*"

"\*\*No,\*\*" replied Fearcloak.

Grim picked up his tunic and carried with him as he went outside. "\*\*Good morning, Thornado.\*\*"

Said Thunder Drum looked at him. "\*\*Grim, good to see you in a better mood than seething like you were yesterday. The extra sleep did you good.\*\*"

"\*\*Are you saying I was cranky?\*\*" Grim asked.

Thornado grunted. "\*\*No one knows with you,\*\*"

Grim hissed and batted playfully at Thornado as he walked passed. He noticed something. "\*\*Thornado, is that a new saddle?\*\*"

"\*\*It is,\*\*" replied Thornado. "\*\*Gobber put it on this morning. What do you think?\*\*"

Grim looked at the saddle. "\*\*It certainly is superb work. Then again, I have not known Gobber to do anything half-way. He is an

excellent smith.\*\*"

"\*\*You should tell him that,\*\*" said Thornado.

"\*\*I will,\*\*" said Grim. He walked away and wondered why Gobber would have made a new saddle for Thornado with the ban in effect. Grim hummed.

"\*\*What is it, Grim?\*\*" Fearcloak asked.

"\*\*I'm not quite sure,\*\*" Grim replied.

\* \* \*

><p>After dark, when everyone was supposed to be in bed, the riders snuck out and went to another island.<p>

They knelt down around spiral scorch marks on the ground.

"Much like the rings inside a tree, the scorch mark can tell you the age and thus the size of the Typhoomerang in question," said Fishlegs.

Hiccup ran his hand over the mark. "Still warm."

"Which means it wasn't here too long ago," said Astrid.

"And, if you look at the mark, you can tell which way it came and which way it's headed," said Fishlegs with a satisfied hum.

Snotlout stood up. "I know which way it's headed without all that stupid stuff."

"Oh, really?" Astrid said. "Where's it going?"

"It's not," Snotlout with a look of fear on his face. "It's coming. At us. Right now!" He pointed at the incoming dragon.

The dragon blew fire at them.

"Anything else we need to learn?" Hiccup asked.

"No!" said Tuffnut.

"We're good!" Ruffnut yelled.

They jumped back onto their dragons and got back into the air. They flew over the water.

Tuffnut looked down. "Hey, Hiccup!"

"Yes, Tuffnut?" Hiccup called back.

"When did your dad join Dragon Flight Club?" he asked.

"He didn't," replied Hiccup.

"Oh," said Tuffnut. "Weird. Because he's right there." He pointed below them.

They looked down and heard Thornado roar. Stoick was flying just below them.

"Just what I suspected," Grim muttered.

"Wha? Aw!" Hiccup let his head drop forward in annoyance. "Quick, evasive cloud maneuvers!"

They ascended into the clouds.

"We have to stay up here in the clouds until we're right over town," said Hiccup.

"What are you two doing?" cried Astrid.

Barf and Belch's heads appeared below the clouds, hanging the twins upside down.

"We can't see in the clouds," said Tuffnut.

"Yeah, it's too cloudy," said Ruffnut.

"Uh, you guys?" Hiccup called. "If your heads are out of the clouds, my dad can see you."

Thornado roared and Stoick was flying him up to the clouds.

"I'm not going to disagree with you there," said Tuffnut.

"All right, guys, split up!" Hiccup ordered. "Head home. And please keep the dragons out of sight."

Everyone flew off in different directions.

"You can't all get away!" they heard Stoick roared.

Deathshriek and Toothless flew back to the village and went into steep dives. At the very last second, they opened their wings. Deathshriek and Grim went in through the large window first, Toothless and Hiccup following.

"This never happened," said Hiccup, jumping into bed.

Toothless and Deathshriek hurried to their sleeping slabs.

Grim turned invisible and hovered by the window.

"Get in bed," whispered Hiccup, hearing his brother moving around.

"I will," Grim replied. He watched Thornado swoop down. "Stoick's going after Fishlegs."

"Oh, great," muttered Hiccup. "Let's hope Fishlegs can hold it together."

\* \* \*

><p>The next night they met up at Dragon Academy.<p>

"He put the screws to me," Fishlegs said. "I thought I was going to crack. Especially when the lights went out. But I held firm. Because I know the first rule of Dragon Flight Club is there is no Dragon Flight Club."

The twins sighed.

"Oh, great," said Tuffnut. "Not that again."

"You did great, Fishlegs," said Hiccup.

"So what are we doing tonight?" Ruffnut asked.

"Nothing," replied Hiccup.

"That doesn't sound fun at all," complained Tuffnut.

"Look, my dad is on to us," said Hiccup. "It's important that we lay low until this blows over. We need to be invisible."

As soon as the words left his mouth, they heard Snotlout yelling as he rode in on a flaming Hookfang.

Hiccup put his hand to his head. "Snotlout, what did I tell you? No dragons!"

"Yeah!" Tuffnut piped up. "Even I knew that."

Hiccup let out an exasperated sigh. "What's so important, anyway?"

Snotlout put his elbow on Hookfang's head and leaned against it. "Let's just say I may have saved this entire island. Alvin and the Outcasts are attacking as we speak."

"Alvin," muttered Hiccup.

"So what do we do now?" Astrid asked.

For the first time that night, Grim spoke up. "We do what we trained to do."

The brothers ran home. They found Stoick sleeping in a chair.

"Dad, wake up," said Hiccup. "Dad!" He put his hand on Stoick's arm.

Stoick woke up abruptly and grabbed his axe with one hand and hoisted Hiccup in the air with the other.

Grim acted fast, jumping onto Stoick's axe arm.

"Dad, it's me. Please, don't chop me," Hiccup said.

"Hiccup!" Stoick yelled. "What did I tell you about sneaking up on me when I'm asleep?" He put Hiccup down and Grim let go of Stoick's arm. He turned to put his axe away.

Hiccup rubbed at his neck. "Okay! It's not fun for me, either. But this is an emergency. The Outcasts are sailing towards Berk."



Stoick stopped and turned around. "And how would you know that?"

"Do I really need to answer that question?" Hiccup asked nervously.

"I told you no flying, Hiccup," Stoick said, putting the axe away and grabbing his helmet.

"Yeah," said Hiccup. "By the way, I've been thinking about that. Uh, doesn't a ban on dragon flying pertain to all dragons? Even, oh, let's say a Thunder Drum?"

Stoick paused. He put his helmet on. "We'll talk about this later. Wake the others." He crossed the room to the door. "We'll need the full Academy."

He opened the door to see Fishlegs on the back of Meatlug looking at him.

"Hey, Chief," Fishlegs said. He got a determined smile on his face. Behind him were the rest of the riders and their dragons.

\* \* \*

><p>The dragons flew over the water with Stoick and Thornado leading. They saw the fleet of Outcast ships.<p>

"I'm going to draw their first round of fire," said Stoick. "When they're reloading, you attack, but not before."

Hiccup and Grim nodded.

Stoick went down to attack.

The Outcasts fired their catapults. Thornado dodged and fired a sonic blast. The Outcasts then fired their crossbows. Another sonic blast knocked the arrows back to the ship. Stoick continued drawing their fire.

"Now, Hiccup!" he bellowed when he threw a rock he caught from a catapult back at a ship.

The riders came down to attack.

Cargo holds opened and several dragons flew out. Acid blasts were fired at the riders.

"Changewings!" shouted Grim.

The Changewings began flying towards Berk.

"We can't let them get to Berk!" Astrid shouted.

"If they go into town, they'll tear Berk apart and we won't be able to see them!" cried Fishlegs.

The riders intercepted the Changewings.

"Astrid, you and others herd them towards Changewing Island and make

sure they don't head back this way," Hiccup ordered. "I'm going to help my dad."

"On it!" Astrid said.

"I'm coming with you!" Grim called, turning Deathshriek in the direction of the Outcast ships.

Toothless and Deathshriek attacked the Outcast ships. One of Toothless' plasma blasts combined with Thornado's sonic blast. The result was a purple explosion that sent sparks across the fleet.

"Dad, our shots combined!" Hiccup yelled.

"Hit them again!" Stoick ordered. "You, too, Grim!"

Deathshriek added his blue fire to the attack. Purple sparks and blue flames showered the Outcasts. The Outcasts turned around.

"They're retreating!" Hiccup cried.

"Well done, Hiccup, Grim," said Stoick.

"Thanks, Dad," said Hiccup.

The three of them turned around and flew back towards Berk.

Stoick looked over at Hiccup. "What is it?"

"I don't know," Hiccup said. "I just figured Alvin would have a little better plan than this."

"Let's just be thankful he didn't," Stoick said.

Grim came up along Hiccup. "I know what you mean. But even Alvin has his bad days. This may be all he had to work with."

Hiccup nodded and they went home.

\* \* \*

><p><strong>We know better than that. We'll see how many reviews I get in the next couple hours and that will factor if I post another chapter before 9:00 p.m. eastern time tonight. I'm still taking guesses for my challenge, so you can submit your answers as well.<strong>

**\*\*CHALLENGE:** After this installment of the Dragon Trainer, Dragon Speaker series ends, I am doing another installment that will be a crossover. What story do you think I'll be crossing HTTYD with? Be warned, it is not a simple answer.\*\*

**\*\*Previous answers: \*\***

**\*\*Eragon\*\***

**\*\*Well, I got two reviews. I may as well post another chapter since I am feeling generous. In answer to one's questions, yes, there will be a sequel and eventually Berk will find out some of Grim's origins. That's all I'm saying for now. I have to leave something to keep you interested in this story. Challenge is still open. Anyone brave enough to guess what the answer is?\*\***

\* \* \*

><p>"Odin's dirty diaper!"<p>

Grim had been working on a pair of dragon scale gloves with dragon claws. His previous pair were getting too tight and he couldn't move his fingers as easily. He was going through another growth spurt.

Grim looked up from what he was doing and walked over to what Gobber was yelling about. Fishlegs and Meatlug were looking very ill.

"Dragon breath," Gobber said, after examining Meatlug. He patted Meatlug's belly.

**\*\*Meatlug, what is wrong?\*\***" Grim asked.

**\*\*I ate too much,\*\***" Meatlug moaned.

Gobber went over to his work bench and started looking for something. He held up a feather. "Aha, there we go!" He walked back over to Meatlug and started tickling her.

"Oh, come on," said Fishlegs. "That's not gonna -."

Meatlug suddenly spat out a load of lava. Fishlegs yelped. Meatlug continued to spit out lava. Fishlegs and Gobber jumped up on the anvil. Grim leapt into the rafters. The entire floor was covered in lava.

"Sorry, about your shop," Fishlegs said. "I've never seen her make this much lava. Or this color, it's weird. Okay, tickle at will!"

"Ugh, keep your tunic on, boy," said Gobber. He handed the feather to Fishlegs. "I only do dragons."

\* \* \*

><p>Later that evening, the other riders came back. Fishlegs was brushing Meatlug. Grim was nearby with Grindheart in the shade with a brush of his own. The Whispering Death was enjoying having his teeth brushed.<p>

Fishlegs saw the riders land and ran over to him. "Did you find your Outcast ship?"

Snotlout mocked him in gibberish. "Do you see an Outcast ship?" He put his sword point down and leaned on it.

"No, we didn't find them," Hiccup said.

"Fishlegs!" Gobber jogged up to them. "Do you know what this is?" He held up a shining sword.

"Don't tell me! Don't tell me," said Tuffnut.

"Um," Ruffnut said, "a sword?"

Tuffnut turned and began punching her. "I said don't tell me!"

"I wasn't telling you," defended Ruffnut. "I was telling him!"

The twins began beating on each other.

"I was gonna guess," said Tuffnut. He was punched again and he cried out.

"Not just any sword," said Gobber. "Feel it!" He tossed the sword to Fishlegs.

Astrid intercepted it. She began looking it over.

"I made it out of that strange lava Meatlug left in my shop," Gobber told him.

Astrid gave the sword a few swings.

Hiccup pointed at the sword. "This was made of Gronkle lava?"

"I prefer to call it Gronkle iron," said Gobber. "I got tired of waiting for it to cool. You know what I always say: Pound it while it's hot. Next thing you know, bang, boom, and I've created this little beauty."

"It's pretty," said Astrid. "But it's too light. Would never hold up in battle." She handed the sword back to Gobber.

"Exactly what I thought," said Gobber. He grabbed Snotlout and pulled him away from the group. "Until I did this."

Gobber let out a yell. Snotlout barely had enough time to raise his sword to block Gobber's attack. It did little since the lighter blade broke Snotlout's blade in half in one swing.

The riders stared in awe.

"Is there any left?" asked Astrid. "I've been wanting a new dagger."

"New helmets!" The twins head-butted each other.

"Ours are banged up from banging," Tuffnut said before he and his sister passed out.

"Ah, yep. It would go nicely on that fancy new shield of yours," Gobber said to Hiccup. He handed him the sword.

"Exactly what I was thinking," said Hiccup. He gave the sword a swing. "It could make it stronger and lighter."

"Excuse me," said Snotlout, holding up his broken sword. "Why don't

you start by making me a new sword?"

"Why don't you start by getting in line?" Gobber retorted.

Fishlegs and Meatlug came over to Gobber.

"The whole town's heard about Meatlug's Gronkle iron," Gobber told him. "And they all want a piece of the action."

Fishlegs stared at the long line at the forge with a smile.

\* \* \*

><p>The next day, Gobber and Fishlegs began cranking out Gronkle iron weapons and armor. Hiccup and Grim stayed in their area of the forge. Hiccup was modifying his shield with the new, strong metal. Grim was carving the tips from his new dragon claw gloves and fitting bits of Gronkle iron into them.<p>

"This Gronkle iron is going to do wonders for my shield," Hiccup said to Fishlegs.

"Right!" Fishlegs was very excited. "How great is this stuff!" He handed over a mace to a waiting Viking.

"So what rocks did you feed her?" Hiccup asked Fishlegs.

"Well," said Fishlegs. "Actually, I can't tell you."

"No?" asked Gobber.

"It's a trade secret," Fishlegs told them. He picked up a mace. "If I told you, I'd have to mace you."

Stormfly landed and Astrid ran in. "Hiccup! The sentries just spotted another boat. We have to go now!"

Hiccup ran over and jumped up on Toothless. "You coming, Fishlegs?"

"I would love to, Hiccup, but as you can see Meatlug and I are pretty busy." Fishlegs motioned to the line of Vikings.

"Do you need me to come?" asked Grim.

"No," replied Hiccup. "You need to finish your gloves. That Gronkle iron is harder to work with once it cools. If we need you, we'll use our dragon calls."

Grim simply nodded.

Toothless took off.

"We're getting low on Gronkle iron, Fishlegs," said Gobber.

Fishlegs took the feather and began tickling. "Okay, girl. Let's make some magic."

Meatlug only spat up two little balls of Gronkle iron.

"What am I supposed to do with that, Fishlegs?" Gobber asked. "Make someone of fetching pair of indestructible earrings?"

A Viking outside raised his hand and tried to get Gobber's attention.

"Not gonna happen, Gunner," Gobber called over his shoulder. He looked at the crowd. They were beginning to chatter. He turned back to Fishlegs. "All right, boy. I think it's time you let me in on your trade secret."

Grim finished his gloves and followed Fishlegs and Gobber. Gobber carried a wheelbarrow over his head. The three of them walked down to where the berry bushes were. There were a variety of different rocks.

"Okay, this is it," said Fishlegs.

Gobber put his wheelbarrow down. "All right, let's load 'er up. Care to tell me which one of these is the wondrous rock?"

"With pleasure," said Fishlegs proudly with his hands on his hips. He looked at all the different rocks. He picked up a dark rock. "No, not that one." He picked up another.

Grim shook his head.

"You don't know, do you?" Gobber said.

Fishlegs dropped the two rocks he was holding and grabbed a bunch of berries from the bush he was standing next to and shoved them into his mouth. He grabbed another handful.

"Of course," he said with a nervous stutter, "I do. It's just that rocks can be very â€" you know."

"No, I don't," Gobber said. "Tell me."

"Meatlug was very emotional that day," Fishlegs explained. "She was just eating everything in sight."

Gobber took a berry out of Fishlegs' hand. "She was?"

"Yes!" Fishlegs said indignantly. "It was tough day for both of us." He tapped his index fingers together as Gobber stared down at him.

Grim silently stood by and waited for Fishlegs to crack. He did not have to wait long.

"Okay, fine, I don't know what rock made Gronkle iron," Fishlegs said. "I'm a failure, a liar, a fraud. Is that what you wanted to hear? Are you happy now?" Fishlegs dramatically grabbed the front of Gobber's shirt and fell to his knees.

Gobber pushed him back. "Listen to me!"

"Okay!" Fishlegs cried.

"We'll just pick up as many different rocks as we can find," said

Gobber. "We'll try them one at a time and eventually we'll land on a winner."

Fishlegs thought about it for a moment. "Promise?"

"I'm sure," replied Gobber.

The three of them began gathering rocks.

"I can ask Meatlug what she ate," Grim said.

"Why didn't you say something earlier?" yelled Fishlegs.

Grim was taken aback a little. "You did not ask me."

"Let's get back to the shop," said Gobber. "Grim can ask Meatlug what she ate. We'll still have the rocks."

They returned to the shop and dumped out the rocks in front of Meatlug. She immediately goggled at the feast in front of her.

"She's so excited," said Fishlegs. "She doesn't know where to start."

Grim knelt down in front of Meatlug. "\*\*\*Meatlug, do you remember what you ate that made your stomach upset and make all that lava?\*\*\*"

"\*\*No, I don't, Grim,\*\*" Meatlug replied. "\*\*\*But I'm sure I'll remember when I start eating.\*\*\*"

Grim looked up at them. "She says she doesn't remember."

"In that case." Gobber bent down and picked up a rock. "May I suggest a little sandstone appetizing?"

Meatlug licked her lips. Gobber threw the rock into her mouth and she began crunching. She spat out some lava on the floor a few seconds later.

The waiting Vikings cheered.

"Good girl," Fishlegs praised.

Gobber took the lava and began pounding it on his anvil. He put it in the cooling bucket. When he took it out, it was clear.

"Worthless," he said and threw it away. It shattered. "Let's try again."

They went through the pile. Gobber selected a dark, shiny rock.

"Oh, I like this one," he said. "Shiny, like Gronkle iron." He tossed in Meatlug's mouth.

She chewed and swallowed. Now they waited for her to spit up something.

"Is it getting hotter in here?" Fishlegs suddenly asked, wiping his

forehead.

"Now that you mention it," said Gobber.

Grim was feeling the heat as well.

Meatlug began to glow red and steam.

"She's gonna burst!" Gobber yelled, alarmed. He handed Fishlegs the feather and shoved him forward. "Tickle her! Tickle her before she blows us all to Valhalla!"

Fishlegs began tickling Meatlug with the feather. "I'm tryin'! Ow! Ow! I'm trying! Ow!"

Meatlug spat the rock back out whole. She stopped steaming and went back to her normal color.

Fishlegs threw the burning feather away. "Sorry, everyone!" he called to the waiting Vikings. "False alarm. I'm open to suggestions."

"This is outrageous!"

"Something must be done!"

Grim heard Hiccup calling for Fishlegs. He unintentionally whipped the crowd into a frenzy.

Gobber came up behind Fishlegs. "You know, I once saw Viking mob turn on one of their own. Tore the poor soul limb from limb. Started just like this."

Grim glared at Gobber.

Fishlegs whimpered. He whirled around to Gobber. "It's just that Meatlug ate so many different rocks. I can't figure it out!" His face suddenly brightened. "Wait! That's it!"

He turned back to the crowd. "Hold on to your tunics, folks. You want the Gronkle iron, you got the Gronkle iron."

"I like your enthusiasm in the face of dismemberment," said Gobber. "I hope for your sake you're backing it up with a plan."

"They can try to dismember him," Grim said in a low voice, pulling on his new dragon claw gloves.

"Oh, I am," Fishlegs said, gathering a bunch of rocks. "It must have been a combination of rocks that made Gronkle iron. That's the only explanation."

Meatlug opened her mouth and Fishlegs began placing the rocks in her mouth. Meatlug ate them without any hesitation.

"Never seen a boulder she didn't like, eh," said Gobber.

She swallowed. They waited.

"Okay," said Fishlegs. "Something's happening."



Grim could hear a hum. He had a feeling something bad was about to happen.

The tool Gobber was holding flew out of his hand and stuck to Meatlug.

"Did you see that?" cried Gobber. "Pulled it right out of my hand!"

Several other tools began doing the same thing.

"Her skin attracting the metal!" Fishlegs realized.

They began pulled the tools that were stuck to her off. Just as quickly as they were pulling them off, other tools were sticking to her. Fishlegs and Grim tried to calm her, but Meatlug was too scared.

"Fishlegs! Grim!"

They turned around in time to see the weapons in the shops flying at Meatlug. Fishlegs grabbed a shield to block them. Grim grabbed a sword by the hilt and threw it as hard as he could, driving it into the wooden wall.

The shield Fishlegs was holding was ripped out of his hands and stuck to Fishlegs. She panicked and one final shield hit her in the rump before bolting from the forge, a bunch of tools following her.

Fishlegs chased after her. "Meatlug! Meatlug, come back!"

"\*\*Meatlug!\*\*" Grim called, racing passed Fishlegs. "\*\*Meatlug, stop!\*\*"

Other metal object flew to her as she ran through town.

"Listen to the sound of my voice!" Fishlegs yelled. "Come back!"

Toothless and Hiccup swooped in. Toothless shot some of the weapons following Meatlug.

"Nice shot, bud!" Hiccup praised.

"Hiccup, you have to help Meatlug!" Fishlegs called up to him.

"What's wrong with her?" Hiccup asked.

"I don't know," Fishlegs answered. "She's attracting metal. She's really scared."

"I've never seen anything like it," Grim added.

"Okay," said Hiccup. He noticed Snotlout. "Snotlout, herd her away from town."

"On it!" Snotlout steered Hookfang down.

Fishlegs was still chasing after his dragon. "Meatlug, come to daddy."

"You're all mine, Meaty," Snotlout said.

Hookfang flew beside Meatlug. Something caught his attention and he looked behind him.

Fishlegs decided to take a different approach. "Stop! Cease! Please. Stop! HEEL!"

Hookfang obeyed the command, immediately sitting down to face Fishlegs. This threw Snotlout off and into several sacks of potatoes.

"I meant to do that, you know," said Snotlout. A Terror climbed out and hissed at Snotlout. Snotlout yelped.

Meatlug flew into the forest. Toothless was following her in the air while Fishlegs and Grim were still running. Grim let out a Baleful Banshee call, knowing he was going to need Deathshriek.

Hiccup realized their current tactics weren't working and had Toothless fly ahead to cut her off.

Meatlug finally came to a stop at the cliff.

Toothless landed and Hiccup got down.

"Meatlug!" he called. "Hey, girl. It's me. Remember me, your old pal, Hiccup." He slowly began walking forward. "Nothing to be afraid of. We're going to figure this out, but you have to stay still."

Meatlug took a step back.

"No, no, no, easy, girl," Hiccup soothed. "I'm here to help you."

Fishlegs and Grim caught up.

"Hiccup!"

"Not now, Fishlegs," said Hiccup.

"No, no, no!" said Fishlegs. "You don't understand."

"Not now, Fishlegs!"

Grim called out, "Hiccup, your leg!"

It was all he could get out of his mouth. Hiccup was knocked to the ground and pulled to Meatlug by his metal leg.

"Is metal," Grim finished lamely.

"Oh," Hiccup said. "Gotcha."

Meatlug flew into the air and over the ocean, Hiccup yelling as she

flew.

"Where you guys going?" Fishlegs yelled.

"Absolutely no idea!" Hiccup yelled back.

"\*\*We've got to go after them,\*\*" said Toothless. He turned to Fishlegs.

At the same, Deathshriek swooped down. "\*\*What is happening?\*\*"

"\*\*Meatlug is attracting metal and Hiccup is now stuck to her hide by his prosthetic leg,\*\*" answered Grim, jumping onto his back.

"\*\*I have never heard of such a thing before,\*\*" Deathshriek told Grim. He spread his wings and flew after Meatlug.

Toothless nudged Fishleg's arm.

"You thinking what I'm thinking?" Fishlegs asked.

"\*\*Get on!\*\*" Toothless pushed his body behind Fishlegs

"Oh, I was afraid you were," Fishlegs moaned. He climbed onto Toothless' back. "All right, Toothless. Let's just not break any speed records, okay? Just give me the Night without the Fury."

Toothless growled, spreading his wings. Fishlegs needed to have his foot in the pedal or they would both fall into the ocean.

"This looks like could present -," Fishlegs started. His foot clicked Toothless' tail into place. "Oh, no."

Toothless was off, trying to catch up with Deathshriek and Meatlug as fast as he could.

Fishlegs was holding onto Toothless' neck, screaming. "Too much Fury! Too much Fury!"

They caught up with Meatlug and Hiccup. Grim and Deathshriek were nowhere to be seen.

"Daddy's coming, Meatlug," Fishlegs called.

Toothless fought to stay in the air and let out a cry. "\*\*Balance yourself!\*\*"

"May be barfing, but he's coming," said Fishlegs. He grabbed ahold of the saddle so Toothless could level out. "Okay, boy, let's get in close."

Fishlegs adjusted the tailfin and Toothless gained speed.

"Easy now. She's going to go left here. Stay in her blind spot."

Fishlegs navigated Toothless behind Meatlug as she swerved around, trying to get the metal off her skin.

"Good job," Fishlegs told Toothless. "Level off."

Now they were below Meatlug.

"Hey," said Hiccup.

"Hey," Fishlegs said back.

"How's it going?" Hiccup asked.

"Better than expected," Fishlegs admitted.

"Yeah, so, this might be a bad time, but I really wanted to say sorry for leaving you behind the other day," Hiccup said.

"I am as well."

They were surprised when Deathshriek and Grim were flying just below Toothless.

"How did you -?" Fishlegs shook his head. "Invisibility. But I thought only Deathshriek could do that."

"It's the scales," said Grim, referring to his clothes. It was a complete lie, but this was not the time to explain the enchantments he and Hiccup had.

"Look, so, sorry," said Hiccup.

"Can we talk about our feelings later?" Fishlegs asked.

"I really think -."

"Hiccup!" Fishlegs said. "I'm trying to concentrate." He reached up to Meatlug.

"Wait!" Hiccup commanded.

"Seriously, can we talk about this later?" Fishlegs asked, becoming annoyed.

"No. Look!" Hiccup pointed behind them.

Below them was an Outcast ship.

"They are going to fire," Grim warned.

Hiccup pulled himself upright. "I know. I got an idea. Dive!"

Meatlug followed Hiccup's command. She spiraled down with Toothless and Deathshriek following.

"The head of a Night Fury is the trophy we're taking home to Alvin!" Grim heard Savage shout.

Meatlug flew passed the side of their ship and all the metal shifted in her direction. The boat rocked and all their weapons flew out of their hands.

Hiccup laughed. "Excellent!" He noticed the weapons following them.  
"Not so excellent!"

"I got this!" Fishlegs said. He had Toothless fly under Meatlug. He tickled her belly and she spat out the rocks she ate earlier. All metal fell off her hide and the weapons stopped following them.

Hiccup fell on Toothless' back behind Fishlegs.

"Okay, good plan," Fishlegs told Hiccup. "Yay, team!"

Grim turned around and watched the weapons fall into the Outcast boat with enough force to put a hole in it. He could not help the laugh that came out of his mouth.

Fishlegs and Hiccup switched dragons and they all flew back to Berk.

"Ah, much better," Fishlegs said. He giggled when Meatlug licked him.  
"Oh, I missed you, too."

"Yes!" Hiccup cheered.

\* \* \*

><p>Later in the afternoon, Hiccup and Grim were looking for Fishlegs. They found him talking to Gobber outside of the forge.<p>

"Fishlegs!" Hiccup called. "Where have you been? We've been looking all over the island for you. We need you."

They turned and flew off.

"Did you hear that girl?" Fishlegs asked Meatlug. "They need us."

Fishlegs climbed onto Meatlug's back and looked behind him.

Gobber gave him a salute.

Meatlug took off following Toothless and Deathshriek. They caught up with the other riders. Hiccup turned around and gave a nod. Fishlegs held up his new sword, happy to be needed.

\* \* \*

><p><strong>No one else knows about Grim and Hiccup's enchantments from Brave Dragon Trainers. The only one is Merida and she's not telling anyone. I don't know if they'll ever let it slip out to any of their friends. I will probably post a chapter tomorrow, so keep a lookout for it. If you haven't guessed already, the next chapter is the episode with the return of Dagur the Deranged. If you remember, him and Grim do not get along very well.<strong>

**\*\*Fair warning: Dagur is in this chapter and there will be a few dragon swears courtesy of Grim. That's all I got to say for this chapter. Other than that, review and go ahead and post your guesses for my challenge.\*\***

\* \* \*

><p>Grim was trying not to smirk as Astrid explained her training exercise. The others hated her previous exercises. Hand to claw combat and spine dodging he learned while he lived with dragons. It was not as bad as they made it out to be. However, Grim had become friends with Deathshriek and Deathshriek wouldn't let any of the other dragons hurt him. So when she said that they had to go from the east beach of Dragon Island to the west side cave at night, with no camping gear, and without dragons, Grim's first thought was it would be easy.<p>

"That's crazy!" yelled Snotlout. "What's the point?"

"To work on our stealth skills and our wild dragon defense," Astrid replied.

"Astrid's right," said Hiccup. "We already know how strong we are with our dragons. But we have to be able to survive and defend ourselves if we ever get separated from them."

"Trust me," said Astrid. "It'll be fun."

This rubbed Grim the wrong way. "Astrid, something like this is not supposed to be fun."

Snotlout scoffed. "And what would you know about it?"

Grim ignored him. "These are wild dragons. You need to have your wits about you. Believing it will be a simple task will get you hurt."

Astrid shrugged. "I like a challenge. It's fun."

"I would be more comfortable if we did this on the island where I lived," said Grim.

"Grim Island?" Tuffnut said.

Grim frowned in confusion. "Grim Island?"

"Yeah," said Ruffnut. "The island where you came from. It's your island."

Grim gave a nod in understanding. "Those dragons I know. They would give you a challenge, but they would not hurt you if I told them to."

"Grim Island is farther than Dragon Island," said Hiccup. "We know Dragon Island better."

"Understood," said Grim. "I am only being cautious."

"Aren't you coming with us?" Fishlegs asked.

"I will come," said Grim. "It would be wise if there is someone to watch over you if there is an emergency."

That night they landed on the east beach of Dragon Island.

"Okay," said Hiccup. "One of us is going to have to skip the training and take the dragons to the cave on the other side of the island. That way they won't try and help us."

A Nadder landed and attacked them. Stormfly and Toothless returned fired and drove the Nadder away.

"This is why I rather have this exercise on Grim Island," said Grim.

"Just like that," said Hiccup. "Okay, so who's going to watch the dragons?"

"I think the obvious choice is -," Fishlegs started.

"Me!" Tuffnut jumped in front of him. "I volunteer."

"But I have way more dragon knowledge," Fishlegs argued.

"Yeah, from a book," said Tuffnut. "But I, I feel them in here." He touched his chest. "Wait. Where is it?" He moved his hand to his stomach. "Yeah, in my stomach. Besides, I didn't say 'me first!'"

Hiccup sighed. "I can't believe I'm saying this, but Tuffnut is right. Fishlegs, no one can argue with your dragon knowledge. But if Alvin attacks with wild dragons, we need to be able to face them, any time, day or night, on our own without any help."

"I hate it when he makes sense," pouted Fishlegs.

Tuffnut jabbed him in the side with his elbow and chuckled darkly.

The other riders said good-bye to their dragons, telling them to go with Tuffnut. The riders started going off with only their lanterns.

Toothless went after Hiccup, nudging him in the back.

"No, no, no, no, no," said Hiccup. "Toothless, you have to go with Tuffnut. I can't believe I'm saying this either, but he's the boss."

"That's right," said Tuffnut. "You heard that. Boss man, head honcho, the big boss-honcho. The honch-boss. Hey, do any of you know where this cave is?"

The others looked back at Tuffnut.

"Just messing with you," Tuffnut said. "Or am I?" He laughed. "Even I don't know."

Toothless look at Grim.

"Deathshriek will be flying over the island," said Grim. "If you're in trouble, all you have to do is yell. I'll be on the ground. One of us will hear you if you are in trouble."

"Thanks, Grim," Fishlegs whimpered. "I feel a little better."

Toothless turned to Grim. "\*\*\*Don't let anything happen to Hiccup.\*\*\*"

"\*\*I'll follow him, Toothless, but he has to do this on his own,\*\*" Grim said. "\*\*\*He has his shield. I have confidence in Hiccup's abilities.\*\*\*"

"\*\*I am glad you do,\*\*" said Toothless. "\*\*\*Hiccup is smart, but not very strong, physically, of course.\*\*\*"

Grim gave a nod.

"Remember, this is about stealth, not speed," said Hiccup, moving inland with the rest of the riders. "It doesn't matter how fast you get there. What's important is how you handle wild dragons if ever you come across one. Understand? All right, good luck, everybody. I'll see you back at the cave." He turned around. "Fishlegs."

Fishlegs hadn't moved from the beach. "What? I'm formulating a plan."

"Fishlegs, you can do this," said Hiccup.

"Ugh, man!" Fishlegs kicked a rock. "I should have stayed in my nice warm bed with Meatlug licking my toes, but no!"

"Move out, Fishlegs!" Hiccup yelled.

"Don't rush me!" Fishlegs said angrily. "I'm having a moment."

A gust of wind blew out his lantern. He yelped and ran inland.

\* \* \*

><p>Deathshriek flew overhead, keeping an eye on the riders. He saw a Nadder approach Astrid. She stayed in its blind spot. It shot a few spines at her before walking away. Deathshriek knew he had little to worry about with Astrid. She had her axe and her smarts and that's all she needed.<p>

In the distance, he could hear Snotlout bragging to no one. The boy's ego would get the best of him one day, Deathshriek knew it. He heard a yell of fear and a splash. There was no roar accompanying it, so he wasn't going to worry about it. He kept on flying.

\* \* \*

><p>Grim was moving on his own. He was staying up high, using his invisibility to keep an eye on Hiccup and the others. From where he was standing, he watched Fishlegs walk passed a Typhoomerang without noticing he was doing so. Grim smirked. The Typhoomerang was interested in Fishlegs, but Grim was certain it would not attack



him.<p>

Grim went back to following Hiccup. He had a promise to keep to Toothless. Grim found Hiccup. He was throwing some rocks to two Gronkles. Something had caught Hiccup's attention. There was a campfire. Grim frowned. Who would have a campfire? This was a stealth mission.

Grim then smirked. Whoever had that campfire going was going to have to deal with Grim. Depending on who it was, someone was going to need a change of skivvies.

\* \* \*

><p>Hiccup wandered into the camping area. "Okay. Come on out. Show yourself, Snotlout, and I'll go easy on you."<p>

Hiccup was knocked to the ground. He opened his eyes and found himself looking at Dagur.

Dagur picked up Hiccup. "Hiccup, old friend! You're alive!" He hugged him and sobbed with joy.

"Uh, last time I checked," Hiccup said nervously. "So I haven't seen you since."

"Since you saved me from that dragon attack back on Berk again," said Dagur. "And your brother! You both were so brave! And you fought off a Night Fury. Twice!"

Hiccup rubbed the back of his neck. "Oh, right. Yes, the dragon attack."

Dagur took out his sword and began swinging while he spoke. "You were like bam, wham! And then you were all like 'Dagur, save yourself.' And I was all like, 'What? Okay, I'm out of here.' But you and your brother stayed and -." Dagur's face darkened. "What are you doing here?" He pointed his sword in Hiccup's face.

"What am I doing here?" asked Hiccup.

"Don't answer that," said Dagur. "I know exactly what you're doing here."

"You do?" Hiccup said with a slight stutter to his voice.

"Oh, yeah," said Dagur. "I do. You're here for the same reason I am, Hiccup. You're here to hunt dragons." He grinned.

Hiccup froze. "Okay, you got me. That's what I am here for. All by myself."

"So, whatever happened to that Night Fury?" asked Dagur. He put his sword away and loomed over Hiccup.

"Ah, well, just bad news," Hiccup said. "It got away."

"That's great news!" Dagur grabbed Hiccup by the shoulders.

"It is?" asked Hiccup.

Dagur put him down and slung his arm over Hiccup's shoulders. "Yes. You and I are going to hunt the unholy offspring of lightning and death itself. We are going to take down that Night Fury once and for all."

"Ah, okay," said Hiccup.

Dagur grabbed him by the shoulder again. He sat him down in front of the fire. "Good." He let out a howling laugh.

\* \* \*

><p>Grim heard the howling laugh and began to worry. It was no dragon call and it certainly wasn't from any of the riders. He began to run the rest of the way to the campfire.<p>

\* \* \*

><p>Dagur was inspecting his sword. "Hiccup, ever since I left Berk, I haven't been able to stop thinking about you."<p>

"Oh, that's kind of strange," said Hiccup. "Well, I'm flattered."

"Not you personally," Dagur said. "You and that Night Fury. It's like you knew that dragon, you were inside its head, rattling its cage. And that, my muscularly challenged friend, that's when I decided I needed to know about dragons, too. So I came here and I learned about them one by one."

He picked up a dragon spine. "The Deadly Nadder; got this in the leg. It was awesome!" he said in a singsong voice. He tossed the spine behind his back. He pointed to a skull on a spike. "The Monstrous Nightmare; look at him! Not so monstrous now, are you?"

Hiccup glared.

"And don't even get me started on the Gronkle," Dagur continued, picking up a leg of meat.

"Uh," Hiccup said, eying the meat. "Is that?"

"No, this is yak," said Dagur. "Anyway, those big boys are quicker than you think."

A dragon called out. Dagur dropped the yak and grabbed his crossbow.

"Whoa!" cried Hiccup. "Nice crossbow."

"My hunting weapon of choice," said Dagur, looking at the trees around them for danger. "You carry â€" hmm? Just a shield?" He looked at the Gronkle iron shield.

"Yeah, yeah," said Hiccup. "Just a shield. Just a plain old shield."

"Very ornate," Dagur said slowly. "My sister had one like that. I myself never felt the need to hide in combat."

\* \* \*

><p>Grim heard a mad battle cry. He was almost to the camp.<p>

\* \* \*

><p>"Yeah," he heard Hiccup say. "Just how long have you been out here, Dagur?"<p>

Dagur? Grim pinched the bridge of his nose. This could not be good.

"Couple of days," replied Dagur. "Weeks, maybe. Hard to tell. It's all a blur when you're on the hunt. Gotta focus. Eyes front, little man!"

\* \* \*

><p>Grim heard Hiccup let out a small cry of pain. "Hey, maybe you should take a little break."<p>

"Not 'til I take out that Night Fury," Dagur said. "I know it's on this island, Hiccup. I can feel it. Right here."

Grim came around to see Dagur grab Hiccup's hand and put it on his chest. "You feel it, too, don't you, Hiccup?" Dagur asked, putting Hiccup's hand on his own chest.

Hiccup stuttered. "No, I just feel really awkward."

Dagur started laughing and pushed Hiccup to the ground. "You bring the funny, Hiccup. I'll give you that. I'm gonna grab my gear, then we're going to get us that Night Fury, brother."

"Brother?" repeated Hiccup.

"That's right," said Dagur. "You and me." He walked away.

"And the awkwardness continues," Hiccup muttered.

Grim decided to follow them at a distance. He thought if he was within striking range of Dagur, he may just take him out. Brother? Hiccup was not Dagur's brother. He was Grim's brother and there were days Grim wondered how he deserved such a wonderful brother like Hiccup. He flexed his fingers, the Gronkle iron tipped claws poking out of his gloves enough to catch the light of the moon.

A Nightmare flew over breathing fire. Dagur was going to take a shot at it, but Hiccup stopped him. Grim thought Dagur was going to hit Hiccup, but Hiccup talked his way out of it. Grim smiled faintly. Hiccup wasn't an eloquent speaker, but he could talk himself out of situations. Dagur praised him and they kept moving.

Grim needed to get to Deathshriek to tell him what was going on. He couldn't call him to him with Dagur listening for dragons.

Grim heard the bushes rustle and the lantern Hiccup was carrying lit up Snotlout. Hiccup was trying to cover for the real reason they were there, but Snotlout was clueless.

"Eels and ice!" Grim cursed under his breath. "He'll get us caught."

"Not the sharpest arrow in the quiver," Grim heard Dagur say as he walked passed Snotlout.

"Not even close," said Hiccup. "Play along," he whispered to Snotlout. "We cannot let Dagur know about our dragons. He'll try to take them home and mount them on his wall."

"Wait," Snotlout said. "You mean -."

\* \* \*

><p>Deathshriek made another pass over the island. Things were going very well in his opinion. He remembered when Grim started out, the boy was very clumsy. If it weren't for Deathshriek, Grim would have been a dragon's meal within the first week of training.<p>

He looked down and saw the other dragons. They were tracking their riders. Deathshriek knew they weren't supposed to leave the cave and swooped down to talk to them.

"\*\*What are you doing?\*\*" Deathshriek asked.

"\*\*Tuffnut fell asleep,\*\*" said Toothless. "\*\*We're worried about our riders.\*\*"

"\*\*You know Grim is following Hiccup,\*\*" said Deathshriek. "\*\*You asked him to.\*\*"

"\*\*What about our riders?\*\*" Stormfly asked. "\*\*Astrid will be fine, I'm sure, but the others will need help.\*\*"

"\*\*Fishlegs is not ready for this,\*\*" said Meatlug. "\*\*I have to be with him.\*\*"

"\*\*And the twins are clueless,\*\*" Barf and Belch added in.

"\*\*And Snotlout is too full of himself to realize when he needs help,\*\*" Hookfang finished.

Deathshriek sighed. "\*\*All right. We will look for them. If they are in trouble, we will help. The whole point of this is for them to learn how to rely on themselves if you are not around.\*\*"

They all gave grunts of approval.

\* \* \*

><p>Grim was about ready to go down there and pounce on Snotlout. He could understand Fishlegs screaming like a girl, but Snotlout was another story, considering he always bragged about being fearless. He worried things could turn more sour than a dragon's stomach after it ate something it wasn't supposed to.<p>

Grim noticed Astrid. He quickly came up behind her and clamped his hand over her mouth. "It's me. Don't make a sound."

Astrid slammed her elbow into his gut.

Grim gave a muffled grunt and slowly let go.

Astrid whirled around. "Grim, what are you doing?" she hissed.

"We have a problem," said Grim.

"Dagur," said Astrid. "I saw."

"Good, then I don't need to tell you the consequences of our dragons being found," said Grim. "You keep an eye on the others. I'm going to stay with Hiccup. If Dagur tries anything." He held up his hand and flexed his fingers. The springs in his gloves released and the claws were revealed. "And if anyone asks, we are dragon hunting."

Astrid nodded.

Grim stayed in the shadows and caught up with Hiccup and Dagur.

"You know, we're a lot alike, Hiccup," said Dagur.

"Really? How's that?" Hiccup asked, not really wanting to know.

"Well, we're both born leaders," said Dagur.

Fishlegs spoke up. "Oh, yeah. He's right about that."

"Sons of chiefs," Dagur continued.

"Yeah, that's true," Hiccup agreed.

"Who had to be eliminated so we could gain control," Dagur finished.

"Yes â€" wait, what?" Hiccup cried. "No. No! My dad hasn't been eliminated from anything."

"But he could!" Dagur said urgently. "Easily. Just say the word." He fired his crossbow back at Fishlegs. The bolt took the lantern out of his hand and pinned it to a tree.

Everyone stared at the lantern.

"Yeah, that's something to think about," said Hiccup.

There was a rustling in the bushes.

Dagur scoffed. "Which one of your friends is it going to be this time?"

"It's hard to say," Hiccup replied.

Grim thought it would have to be Ruffnut or Tuffnut. Astrid was behind Snotlout, letting him know she was there. After hitting Snotlout in the face with his own fist, she flipped over some bushes and disappeared.

"\*\*Get away,\*\*" came a growl.

"Eels!" Grim swore again.

A plasma blast shot through the bush at Dagur's feet. Toothless was behind the bush, growling at Dagur.

"The Night Fury!" Dagur yelled in excitement. "Hiccup, my brother, you've done it. You've led me right to it!" He aimed his crossbow at Toothless.

Toothless continued to growl at Dagur.

Hiccup was horrified.

"Arrow, meet dragon," said Dagur. "Dragon, meet -."

"No, no, Dagur, wait," said Hiccup. "I would like to do it."

"I saw him first!" shouted Dagur.

"But I led you to him," Hiccup said, taking the crossbow away.

Dagur snatched it back. "But I brought the crossbow. All you brought was that useless ornate shield." He shoved him. "Now, stand aside."

A group of Terrors flew out and attacked Dagur before continuing on their way. Dagur's shot missed and hit a tree.

Hiccup gave the hand signal for Toothless to hide. Toothless obeyed and disappeared.

"What's wrong with you?" Astrid yelled at Dagur, coming from around the tree. "I almost had those Terrible Terrors. They were right in my hands!"

Dagur whirled on her. "Terrors, schmerrors. We're hunting a Night Fury here!"

Grim decided this would be the best time to show himself. "And doing a poor job of it."

Dagur looked at Grim and turned back to Hiccup. "Did you leave anyone back on Berk?"

Hiccup gave a nervous chuckle and went to Astrid.

Grim walked over to Dagur. "Do not blame Hiccup for my being here, Dagur. Stoick had me follow them. I am to report their progress at the end of the hunt."

Dagur looked down at Grim. There wasn't much of height difference, but Grim was still shorter than Dagur. "You're good, Grim. I'll give you that. You wear dragon hide for clothes. I wish I could do that. Tell you what; when I get that Night Fury, you can skin it for me."

Grim stopped and winced.

"Do not blame Hiccup for my being here," Dagur repeated. "Who talks

like that?" He walked over to where his arrow was stuck in the tree and pulled it free.

Grim was worried. If Toothless was out then so were the other dragons. What was Tuffnut doing? And where was Deathshriek? He had to have seen them.

Dagur went back to Hiccup and slung his arm over his shoulders. "Come, Hiccup, while the trail is still warm."

"I can't fight with an entourage," Hiccup said as they walked away. "Go back to Berk. Leave us to our business."

"That's just great!" said Snotlout. "How are we supposed to find our dragons?"

Fishlegs smiled. "Actually, it shouldn't be that hard."

Hookfang breathed smoke on Snotlout. The dragons had found them.

Astrid turned to Grim. "Hiccup could use some help."

Grim nodded. "Deathshriek and I will stay behind and see what we can do. You find the twins and Barf and Belch."

"Right," said Astrid.

Grim and Deathshriek followed Hiccup and Dagur on foot.

"\*\*Is this wise?\*\*" asked Deathshriek. "\*\*Toothless cannot fly without a rider. You can operate the pedal and still be invisible.\*\*"

"\*\*I know,\*\*" said Grim. "\*\*But those arrows are made to kill a dragon. You saw what one at long range did to me on his last visit to Berk. No, I don't want you flying within his range, especially around Toothless and if you are invisible. Dagur won't be able to see what he's shooting at and he may hit you.\*\*"

"\*\*Unlikely, but I understand,\*\*" said Deathshriek.

A fiery arrow lit up the sky.

"\*\*I do not like the look of that,\*\*" said Grim.

A moment later it was returned by many flaming arrows.

"\*\*Dagur brought help,\*\*" Grim said unnecessarily.

"\*\*He really wants Toothless,\*\*" said Deathshriek.

Grim and Deathshriek caught up with Dagur and Hiccup.

"I don't care about sporting," Dagur was saying. "I care about killing that Night Fury and wearing its skull as a helmet."

Grim and Deathshriek exchanged looks of equal horror.

Dagur aimed carefully to the rocks where Toothless was hiding.

"\*\*We must do something,\*\*" said Deathshriek.

Grim looked around to see what they could do. The water was below Toothless and there was a chance Toothless could jump and glide down to swim. But there were Berserkers waiting in the water.

"Okay, that's it," said Hiccup. "I am not going to let you kill that dragon."

Dagur rolled his eyes. "This again? Fine, you saw it first. You can take home a wing or something."

"No, I'm pretty much gonna take the whole thing." Hiccup cupped one hand to his mouth and let out a howling roar.

Dagur turned around in shock. Another roar made him turn back to the rocks where Toothless was perched on top off. Toothless jumped over Dagur's head and went to Hiccup.

Dagur stared at Toothless' back. "Is that a -?" He started to ask.

"Saddle?" Hiccup finished. "Yes, Dagur, that's exactly what it is." He climbed onto Toothless.

"So I was -,"

"Right all along," Hiccup finished again. "We do not hunt dragons on Berk." He adjusted Toothless' tail. Toothless poised to strike or to fly, whatever Hiccup wanted to do. "We ride them."

"Your father lied to me," Dagur said in outrage. "You lied to me!"

"He was trying to keep the peace between our tribes," said Hiccup. "So was I."

"By making a fool out of me?" Dagur shouted.

"You don't really need a lot of help with that Dagur."

Dagur reached for his sword and Toothless snarled.

"Your move," said Hiccup.

Grim swung himself onto Deathshriek's back and led him out into the firelight from the burning arrows. "And you should choose wisely."

"You could have been my brother, Hiccup," said Dagur. "Now, you're my enemy." He turned his back on them.

"Have it your way," said Hiccup. "But remember, we have the dragons and we are not afraid to use them. Let's get out of here, bud."

Toothless and Deathshriek took off. Toothless did not get far before he was wrapped up in bolas. He and Hiccup fell to the ground.



"Hiccup!" shouted Grim.

Deathshriek turned around. Another bola came at Deathshriek. It wrapped him up and hit Grim so hard in the head he was knocked unconscious. They fell to the ground in a heap.

A bola wrapped around Toothless' mouth. Dagur gave a battle cry, his sword above his head, charging for Toothless. Hiccup blocked the blow with his shield. Dagur kicked him away and tried to take Toothless' head off again. The shield was thrown and knocked Dagur's sword from his hands. The shield came back and Hiccup caught it. Dagur threw some knives and Hiccup blocked them with his shield while taking cover behind a tree.

Toothless brought his tail up and struck Dagur. The Berserker was knocked to the ground next to his crossbow. He picked it up and loaded a bolt. "Your move, Hiccup."

Hiccup jumped behind a tree. He looked at Toothless. He needed to get him free. He took a step out only to have several more arrows shot at him.

Dagur turned the crossbow at Toothless and fired a few arrows at him. Toothless rolled away to avoid them.

"You can't hide forever," Dagur said.

Hiccup stepped out from behind the tree. "I don't plan to." His shield opened up into a crossbow and he loaded one arrow into it. He fired at Dagur.

Dagur jumped behind a bush, under a tree. "Nice try, brother."

Grim was coming to. He saw Deathshriek and stumbled to his feet. With his claws, Grim began to cut through the bolas holding Deathshriek.

"Oh, and by the way, I'm not your brother," said Hiccup. He fired the grappling hook into the tree above Dagur.

Dagur laughed. "You missed."

"Did I?" Hiccup asked slyly. He gave a yank on the shield.

Dagur was pinned beneath the broken tree limb. "I've got to get me one of those ornate shields!"

Hiccup hurried to cut Toothless free.

Dagur tackled him and they rolled away.

Toothless got his mouth free and fired a plasma blast at Dagur.

Hiccup got up and finished freeing Toothless. By the time he was done, Grim had finished freeing Deathshriek.

Toothless shot two more blasts at Dagur before flying over the water, howling.

"Dragon attack!" Dagur roared.

Hiccup turned around and saw the rest of the riders. "We better go now. His men are on the way."

"Come on," said Snotlout. "We can take them."

"Not today," said Hiccup. "Dagur will be back. And when he is, we'll be ready."

They flew back to Berk. The sun was just coming up when Hiccup turned back to look at island.

"What is it?" Grim asked him. His speech was slurred slightly.

"Nothing," said Hiccup. "Are you okay? You hit the ground hard."

"It was the bola that hit me harder," said Grim. "I don't remember hitting the ground. I'll be fine. Let's worry about getting back and telling Stoick what happened tonight."

Hiccup gave a nod.

\* \* \*

><p>Grim is really hating Dagur right now for the whack to the head by that bola. I really want to create some friction between those two. We already know that Grim can take Dagur in a fair fight from the Dragon Trainer, Dragon Speaker story, but Dagur does not like to play fair. We'll be seeing Dagur again when I post the View of the Skrill chapter.<p>

## 6. Chapter 6

\*\*I didn't get any reviews for the last chapter. I'm beginning to think that I have to bribe you guys with an extra chapter so I can get some feedback. Shame on you all. And so far I've only had one person who has taken a guess at my challenge. Anyway, this chapter follows the Tunnel Vision episode, but with a few small differences. Screaming Death, anyone?\*\*

\*\*CHALLENGE: After this installment of the Dragon Trainer, Dragon Speaker series ends, I am doing another installment that will be a crossover. What story do you think I'll be crossing HTTYD with?  
\*\*

\*\*Previous answers: \*\*

\*\*Eragon\*\*

\* \* \*

><p>Grim was riding Deathshriek as he and the other riders tried to herd Gobber into a tub for a bath.<p>

"I didn't think he could move this fast," Hiccup commented while Stoick shouted orders.

"A Viking is supposed to smell this way!" Gobber roared. "It's a badge of honor!"

A purple Terror climbed up on Gobber's shoulder and sniffed him.

"\*\*Ew!\*\*" it flew off and collided into a post, completely disoriented.

"It's for your own good, Gobber," Stoick said.

"Actually, it's for the good of the town," said Hiccup.

"And the dragons," Grim added. "They may smell like fish, but even they give themselves baths."

"Get in the tub!" commanded Stoick.

Hookfang and Snotlout came up behind Gobber.

"Hookfang, toss him in the tub!" said Snotlout.

Hookfang threw Snotlout off his back and the rider landed in the empty tub.

Snotlout sat up. "Every. Single. Time! Doesn't this get old for you?"

Hookfang rolled his eyes. "\*\*Your mouth gets old.\*\*"

Hiccup made a hand signal to Toothless. The Night Fury began to sneak up on Gobber. Hiccup gave a look to Astrid to let her know to get ready.

"I won't do it, Stoick!" Gobber held up an axe.

"Now, Astrid!" yelled Hiccup.

Stormfly shot into the air. This distracted Gobber. While he was distracted, Toothless put his head under Gobber's legs and tossed him into the tub.

Stoick walked over to the tub and grabbed Gobber by the head to hold him down. "Fishlegs, soap and water!"

Fishlegs flew over on Meatlug and emptied a small amount on Gobber's head.

"You'll have to do better than that, son," said Stoick.

"I can't, sir," said Fishlegs. "The well, it's run dry."

Hiccup, Grim, and Stoick went over to the well. Stoick put the bucket down and pulled it back up. The bucket was dry.

"We just dug that well two summers ago," said Stoick.

"Water doesn't just disappear," said Hiccup. "There has to be a reason."

Stoick sighed and threw down the bucket. "We'll have to dig a new well. And until it's done, we'll have to ration water. Which means -."

"No baths!" Gobber said proudly.

Grim fought not to choke on the stench as Gobber clapped Hiccup on the back. Hiccup, however, dry heaved.

"Always a silver lining," Gobber said with a smile.

Grim turned to Stoick. "Digging a new well should not be a problem. Grindheart can easily dig one for us. We must find a good place to dig it first."

"You're right," said Stoick. "We'll still need water until then. Hiccup, gather your riders and see what water you bring back from the lake and mountain streams. Grim, find Grindheart. The day is cloudy enough for him to be out in the open."

Grim nodded and hurried to find Grindheart. Instead of finding Grindheart, he found Fearcloak.

"\*\*Fearcloak, do you know where Grindheart is?\*\*" Grim asked.

"\*\*He went for a flight since it is a nice day for him,\*\*" replied Fearcloak.

"\*\*We need his help,\*\*" said Grim. "\*\*Could you find him for me? Take Axewing with you if you see him. We need Grindheart as soon as possible.\*\*"

Fearcloak barked and flew off to find Grindheart.

Grim returned to town to see Meatlug lowering something down the well on a rope. Toothless was pacing wildly. He put his front paws on the well and looked down.

"Keep it steady," Fishlegs told Meatlug.

"Lower," Hiccup's voice came from the well. "Keep going. Just a little more. Okay! Hold it right there."

Grim leaned over the side and saw a faint glow from a lantern.

Hiccup ran his hand on the side of the well. "The water level was way up here. And it's still wet!"

He took a loose pebble and dropped into the abyss. It took two seconds before it echoed when it hit the bottom.

"Fishlegs, get me all the way down!" Hiccup called.

"Are you sure?" asked Fishlegs. "It looks awfully dark and scary down there."

"Fishlegs!"

"Okay! Take him down girl," Fishlegs said.

"\*\*Be careful,\*\*" Toothless called down worriedly.

Meatlug continued to lower Hiccup down. Her attention was caught by a cart full of rocks. She began flying over to them. The rope shook and Hiccup held on tight.

"Fishlegs!" Hiccup yelled.

"Steady, Meatlug," Fishlegs said gently.

The rope snapped.

"Hiccup!" Fishlegs gasped. "Oh, no!"

Toothless launched himself into the air and dove down the well.

"Toothless! Hiccup!" Fishlegs yelled.

Toothless let out a roar that echoed up to the surface.

"\*\*Hiccup!\*\*"

Hiccup hit the bottom and got to his feet. A roar caught his attention and he was knocked down as Toothless hit bottom as well.

Hiccup knelt down. "Toothless, you okay?"

Toothless licked Hiccup's face.

"Hiccup!" Stoick and Grim yelled.

"We're okay!" Hiccup shouted up.

"Can you fly back up?" Stoick asked.

"No, it's too narrow," replied Hiccup.

"Someone get me a rope," ordered Stoick. "I'm coming down after you, son!"

"Dad, don't," said Hiccup. "Then all three of us will just be stuck down here."

"Well, just stay right there until I can think of a way to bring you both up," Stoick told him.

"We're fine," said Hiccup. "The water had to go somewhere. Besides I have Toothless with me. We'll find another way out."

"He makes an excellent point, sir," Fishlegs supplied. "The Night Fury has an uncanny ability to navigate -."

Stoick and Grim glared at Fishlegs.

"And this is clearly none of my business," Fishlegs said.

"Wait," they heard Hiccup say. "I think I found something. It looks

like a tunnel."

"Well, just be careful down there, son," said Stoick. "We'll be standing by if you need us."

Grim frowned heavily. "There shouldn't be a tunnel down there. Not that far down, anyway."

Stoick and Fishlegs looked at Grim.

"Why is that?" Fishlegs asked.

"Grindheart told me about his attack on Berk when he was looking for Toothless," said Grim. "He told me all of his tunnels were deep enough to create mole hills and small earthquakes, but not so deep to hit ground water."

"You think Grindheart did this?" Stoick asked.

"If he did, it was not intentional," said Grim. "Grindheart usually stays in the caves and burrows on the other side of the island to keep the destruction to a minimum."

"Where is Grindheart?" asked Stoick. "I thought I told you to find that dragon."

"I sent Fearcloak to look for him," said Grim.

"You better find that dragon," Stoick told Grim.

\* \* \*

><p>Hiccup and Toothless walked down the tunnel.<p>

"Okay," said Hiccup when they came to a fork in the tunnel. "This way. I don't know about you, but I get the distinct feeling we're not alone down here."

There was a crash of rocks and Toothless looked behind. "\*\*\*I smell we're not alone down here.\*\*"

They entered a cavern.

"Wow, these caverns run right under the town," said Hiccup. They kept going and Hiccup stepped on something that crunched. He knelt down and inspected the large egg shells he had stepped on. "Dragon eggs?"

Toothless sniffed them and let out a threatening growl. "\*\*\*Whispering Deaths.\*\*"

Hiccup started forward and found more shells. "Look at these." He took a few more steps and found a crate with a spiked helm painted in red on the side. "That's the Outcast crest."

There was a screech.

"Toothless, light up the cave down that way."

Toothless fired a plasma blast in the direction Hiccup was pointing.

The light lit up more dragon egg shells. There were also tunnels in the walls and ceiling.

"Those are Whispering Death tunnels," Hiccup said.

Toothless growled. "\*\*\*Too small for Grindheart,\*\*" he added.

"Yeah, not my favorite dragon either, bud," said Hiccup. "And I don't even want to know who made that."

They looked at a massive tunnel. Toothless noted the tunnel was far too big to be made by Grindheart.

They kept moving. After a few minutes, they came to a caved in tunnel.

"Oh, great," said Hiccup.

The lantern went out.

"Aw, even greater," said Hiccup. "Toothless, do you mind?"

Toothless carefully relit the lantern with a small flame.

There was a rustle behind them followed by a roar. A Whispering Death was behind them. Toothless reacted and fired a plasma blast.

Hiccup swung himself onto Toothless' back. "Let's get out of here, bud!"

They raced to find a way out with a Whispering Death behind them. Another one flew in front of them. Toothless took another tunnel. A third popped up from the ground.

"That's one," said Hiccup. He looked behind them. Two more caught up with them. "That's two and three."

Toothless flew away with the three Whispering Deaths behind them.

"Aw, come on!" Hiccup groaned. He looked forward and when he looked back again, the dragons were gone. He turned Toothless around. "Uh, that's weird."

They backtracked.

"Where'd they go?"

A few rocks hit Toothless in the head from above. "\*\*\*Ow!\*\*\*"

Hiccup and Toothless looked up.

"They're heading up!" Hiccup said in a bit of panic. "To the town! We have to stop them!"

"\*\*\*Hold on, Hiccup!\*\*\*" Toothless flew up the tunnel.

\* \* \*

><p>Grim was coming back into town after he had been told by a Terror

that Grindheart had been told he was needed. He looked at Snotlout and shook his head. The arrogant Viking was yelling, "Get your Snotlout's mountain fresh spring water here!" Astrid had an annoyed look on her face. She gave Grim a pleading look when he passed and Grim wasn't sure if she was asking him to help her or if she wanted him to keep his mouth shut when she beat the living daylights out of Snotlout.<p>

The ground began to shake. Grim's first thought went to Grindheart and was angrily wondering what the dragon was thinking.

A Whispering Death surfaced right at little Gustav's feet, sending the boy back on his butt. It looked down at him and roared.

Grim's mind processed two things in a split second. One was that the Whispering Death was not Grindheart and the second was that Gustav was about to be attacked. Grim raced forward and grabbed Gustav.

"Stand back!" Gobber shouted. He appeared with a shield in his good hand and a hammer attached to his arm. He blocked the dragon's fire with the shield and kicked cart into its body before giving it a beating with his hammer. The dragon gave up dove beneath the surface.

It tunneled away, creating a mole hill that destroyed the cart Snotlout set up for his water. Snotlout just managed to get out of the way. "Hey! You break it you bought it!"

Another mole hill came at him.

Snotlout jumped up and started running. "Okay, store's closed!"

Grim climbed to the roof of a house and let out a horrific scream. **"\*\*Deathshriek!\*\*"**

His call got the attention of the Whispering Deaths. Grim jumped off the roof and ran for the forge. He grabbed his dragon claw gloves from Hiccup's work station and raced out to meet up with Deathshriek.

They flew over to Astrid and Fishlegs.

"Where did these Whispering Deaths come from?" Astrid asked. "And why are they so much smaller?"

"They're hatchlings," Grim answered.

"Well, that's good news, right?" Astrid said.

"Actually, it's not," said Fishlegs. "Newly hatched Whispering Deaths can be more deadly than adults. They don't have control of their jaw muscles or their spines. They're kind of like out of control saw blades."

"Sounds about right," Astrid said.

A fourth Whispering Death flew over their heads, this was considerably bigger.



"Grindheart!" Grim said.

Grindheart started after one of the baby Whispering Deaths. "\*\*\*You hatchlings need to learn your place.\*\*" He fired a few spines to chase it out of town.

Deathshriek and the others went after the other Whispering Deaths.

Astrid had Stormfly fire at a Whispering Death. She flew over to the twins. "We can hit them better when they're above ground," she said. She saw the twins weren't doing anything to help. They weren't doing anything at all. "What are you two doing?"

"Whispering Deaths," said Ruffnut. "I could watch them all day."

"The way they rip through solid rock, it's glorious," said Tuffnut. He sniffed and rubbed his eyes.

"Uh, are you crying?" Ruffnut asked.

"No! Maybe. Don't judge me!"

Astrid looked behind them. "Uh, guys!"

The twins and their dragon turned to see a Whispering Death.

Barf fired some gas that turned the Whispering Death away. It went underground.

"Flush it out!" Grim ordered.

"Yeah!" yelled Snotlout. "That's the one who took my water!"

Hookfang fired a stream of fire into the hole. Several other holes erupted with fire before two Whispering Deaths shot out like fiery streamers.

Deathshriek and Grim went after one of them, keeping it above ground with his blue fire and screams.

Hiccup and Toothless joined the chase, Hiccup holding his Gronkle iron shield. Astrid flew up beside him.

"The Whispering Death tunnels drained our water supply," Hiccup told her.

"Yeah, kind of figured that," said Astrid. "We need to keep them in the sunlight."

"That is why I have this." Hiccup held his shield in front of him, reflecting the sunlight off of it.

They rounded up the three Whispering Deaths using Hiccup's shield.

"It's working," said Astrid. "We're driving them away from the village."

The other dragons joined in, firing blasts of fire.

"That's right! You better run!" yelled Snotlout.

The three Whispering Deaths flew away.

Grim turned to Grindheart who was flying beside him. He gave him a nod and Grindheart nodded back.

"I'm gonna miss those guys," said Tuffnut. "They were, like, dangerous, but cool at the same time. Kind of like me."

"I don't think this is over yet," said Hiccup. "Not by a long shot."

"Stop being so negative!" shouted Snotlout. "Enjoy the moment, Hiccup. Buy some water."

There was a great rumble from the ground, much larger than anything the Whispering Deaths could manage.

Grindheart let out a cry. "\*\*\*Great rock eater!\*\*\*"

Grim wondered what that meant, but knew it was not good by the fear in Grindheart's tone.

"\*\*\*What is going on?\*\*\*" roared Axewing, flying over the cliff.

The ground erupted and a massive white dragon emerged from the ground. Its head was large as a house with a rectangular mouth with three rows of teeth. It stared them down with blood red eyes. It let out a roar.

"Uh, so that's what I was afraid of," said Hiccup. "Suggestions, anyone?"

It roared at them again before diving at Fishlegs and Snotlout. They got out of the way and the dragon started flying off. It had the body of a Whispering Death with a red tipped tail and spines that were more like pikes.

"What is that thing?" Snotlout whimpered.

Hookfang was sporting a similar look of horror.

"Fishlegs, is that in the Book of Dragons?" Hiccup asked.

Fishlegs babbled unintelligibly.

"Fishlegs!" Hiccup yelled more forcefully. "Is that thing in the Book of Dragons?"

"Uh, definitely not," Fishlegs said.

"Are you sure?" Hiccup asked.

"Hiccup, I'm certain I would've remembered all my Boulder Class, titan wing Whispering Deaths with bright red eyes that bore a hole right through your very soul."

"Toothless, plasma blast," Hiccup ordered.

It hit the white dragon. It turned around and screamed. The riders covered their ears and the dragons fought to stay in the air.

"It's affecting our dragons," said Astrid.

"I know," said Hiccup.

"The scream is more disorienting than Deathshriek's," said Grim.

Tuffnut grinned. "Screaming Death. I love it!"

The other Whispering Deaths returned.

"Okay, maybe love is too strong a word," Tuffnut added.

Astrid turned to Hiccup. "Hiccup, what are we going to do?"

"You guys focus on the Whispering Deaths," said Hiccup. "I'll try to keep the Screaming Death busy."

"Good luck with that," said Snotlout.

"Remember your Flight Club training!" Hiccup called after them before flying off.

"I knew we should have gone that day," groaned Tuffnut.

The Screaming Death burrowed and resurfaced in town. A Viking woman tripped and fell. The Screaming Death looked down at her.

Grim and Deathshriek landed between the two and Deathshriek shot blue fire in the Screaming Death's face.

Grim jumped off of Deathshriek's back and helped the Viking woman to her feet. "Run!" he ordered.

A plasma blast hit the Screaming Death in the jaw. It whirled around and fired a fireball at Toothless as he flew by.

It missed and Toothless came around for another shot. The shot hit the Screaming Death in the body. The Screaming Death whipped tail and hit Toothless.

Toothless and Hiccup crash landed, Hiccup being thrown to the ground.

Hiccup picked himself up slowly and saw the Screaming Death about to attack.

Help came in the form of Stoick and Thornado. Thornado used a sonic blast to distract the Screaming Death. It decided it didn't want to deal with the Thunder Drum and flew off.

Hiccup picked up his shield. "Thanks, Dad."

"I don't even want to know what that is," said Stoick. "But we need

to get it out of here."

"Way ahead of you," said Hiccup. "I'll try to lead it away from the village."

Grindheart and Grim were helping to lead the Whispering Deaths away from the village.

"\*\*Grim, dragon speaker, I will help the riders,\*\*" Grindheart said. "\*\*Hiccup will need help against the white beast!\*\*"

Grim nodded and turned Deathshriek around. When they got back to the village, Hiccup was using his shield to reflect light into the Screaming Death's eyes. The Screaming Death burrowed for a moment and everyone thought it was over. It then charged up and went after Hiccup.

"\*\*Hiccup!\*\*" Grim and Deathshriek yelled.

Toothless and Thornado got out of its way.

"Apparently it doesn't mind," Grim and Deathshriek heard Stoick say.

"It must not have that weakness," said Hiccup.

"Well, we better figure out what it does have and quick," said Stoick.

The Screaming Death turned and screamed. The three dragons tried to stay steady and keep their riders on their backs.

"What's happening?" Stoick yelled.

"It's the scream!" Grim yelled over the sound. "It affects their senses!"

Toothless fired a plasma blast in the Screaming Death's face.

The Screaming Death went after Toothless. Stoick and Grim were right behind them. A Whispering Death popped up from the ground.

"Sonic blast!"

Thornado fired the sonic blast and knocked the Whispering Death back.

Grim and Deathshriek flew ahead.

Toothless dodged a volley of spines. Hiccup turned around and shined the light in the Screaming Death's eyes. The Screaming Death didn't flinch away from the light.

"It's actually attracted to the light," said Hiccup. "I guess that can be a weakness to."

Deathshriek came up beside the Screaming Death's head.

"\*\*Scream!\*\*" Grim ordered.

Deathshriek let out his bloodcurdling, bone-chilling shriek right in the Screaming Death's ear. The Screaming Death was disoriented and spiraled in the air.

"A good taste of your own medicine," Grim said proudly.

"Grim, I have an idea!" Hiccup yelled. "Toothless, to the sea stacks!"

Deathshriek and Toothless flew to the sea stacks, a very angry Screaming Death following them.

"You really made him mad," Hiccup said to Grim.

"We can play this game, too," Grim said.

They flew down to the sea stacks. It was not long before they were joined by the other riders.

"Need a little help?" Astrid asked.

"More than a little," replied Hiccup. "It doesn't have the Whispering Death's weakness. It goes after the sunlight."

"So how do we beat it?" asked Astrid.

Hiccup thought for a moment. "We give it what it wants!" he said determinedly. "I'll keep it following me. You get behind and hit it with everything you have."

"Got it."

Astrid and Grim fell back to the other riders. They came around to follow the Screaming Death and found Hiccup and Toothless had crashed on a sea stack.

A fire ball hit the Screaming Death in the face. It looked down and saw the Zippleback and the twins.

"Barf, let him have it!" yelled Ruffnut.

Barf complied with Belch lighting the gas.

Hookfang swooped down and fired on the white dragon as well.

"Not so tough after all, are you?" Snotlout taunted.

The Screaming Death sent a volley of spines at Hookfang and Meatlug, who was hovering nearby.

"He didn't mean that, sir, uh, ma'am, whatever you are," Fishlegs stuttered.

The dragons came back for another attack. The Screaming Death began releasing fireballs rapidly in an arc at the riders. Everyone scattered to get out of the way.

Hiccup got back up on Toothless and was shining light at the Screaming Death again. "Let's see if we can use its size against him."

Toothless took off. They went up in the clouds, the Screaming Death snapping its jaws after them.

"Hold, Toothless," said Hiccup. "Now!"

They dove back through the clouds and wove through the sea stacks, taking tight turns and creating near misses. The Screaming Death was too big to do so and hit the stacks, taking out chunks out of the rock. The shield was a winking beacon for the Screaming Death and it was determined to catch it. It proved to be its downfall when Toothless stopped and flew straight up. The Screaming Death flew head first into a large sea stack and fell to the ground. Several boulders fell down and pinned its wings.

The Screaming Death roared. "\*\*\*Retreat!\*\*\*"

The Whispering Deaths, who were fighting with Thornado and Grindheart, turned and flew to the injured dragon.

The Screaming Death slammed its head into the rocks pinning its wing and tried to fly. Grim could see one wing would not work and the large dragon crashed to the ground again.

"It's injured!" Grim yelled.

The three Whispering Deaths came to aid the Screaming Death, two getting under its wings and the third under its body. The three smaller dragons carried the Screaming Death away.

"It can't fly," said Hiccup. "Wow, look at that!"

Toothless growled. "\*\*\*Don't come back!\*\*\*"

"Whoa, bud, whoa," said Hiccup. "It's hurt. Let it go."

The riders watched the four dragons fly across the water. There was a pained roar that came from the Screaming Death.

"\*\*\*This isn't over!\*\*\*"

Grim watched the dragons go with a cold look in his eyes.

\* \* \*

><p>They went back to the village and started to help with the clean-up. Hiccup and Grim spoke to Stoick as he righted a post.<p>

"I found Outcast markings on a crate in those tunnels," Hiccup told them. "I think Alvin planted those eggs knowing they would hatch and tear Berk apart. He might now be riding dragons yet, Dad, but he is using them."

"We'll deal with Alvin and his wild dragons later," said Stoick. "Right now we have to fix our water problem."

"Grindheart is working on it right now," said Grim.

Fishlegs called out, "You guys, look! The well's filling back

up!"

The three of them came over and looked down the well.

"Looks like Grindheart found a way to dig a channel to redirect the water back to our well," said Hiccup.

Gobber walked by. "Well, I'll be going now."

Stoick grabbed Gobber by the shoulder. "Not so fast, Gobber."

Minutes later, Gobber was in the tub, clothes and all with the twins scrubbing him down roughly. Gobber was screaming for mercy.

"Make sure you scrub behind his ears," Stoick told the twins. "I think I saw a bird fly out of there."

The twins laughed and continued to scrub.

\* \* \*

><p>Grim and Hiccup were on a sea stack looking out over the water. Stormfly landed with them and Astrid jumped off.<p>

"There you are," she said. "We missed you at the scrub down. You should have seen what came out from between his toes."

"I'm more concerned about what came out from under Berk," said Hiccup.

"What are you talking about?" Astrid asked. "That thing's long gone."

"I'm not so sure," said Hiccup.

"Grindheart told me Whispering Death hatchlings often return to where they were hatched and claim it as their own," said Grim.

Astrid and Hiccup looked at Grim.

"That doesn't seem to be what's worrying you, is it?" said Astrid.

Grim looked out over the water. "Grindheart was afraid of the Screaming Death. It takes a lot for him to fear something. He's held a grudge with Toothless."

"That's true," said Hiccup, rubbing Toothless' head.

"We have not seen the last of the Screaming Death," said Grim.

\* \* \*

><p><strong>Riders of Berk, Screaming Death. Screaming Death, Riders of Berk. Now that we've met can we possibly avoid trying to kill each other? No. The next chapter was supposed to be Race to Fireworm Island, but I'm not doing that episode because it made me sad and I didn't want to have Grim too angsty. If you recall, Grim and Deathshriek are supposed to go back to their island to meet with all

their dragon friends, so that will be in the next chapter along with Fright of Passage. As always, review, and does anyone else have any ideas to the answer of my challenge? Seriously, guys, use your imaginations!<strong>

## 7. Chapter 7

**\*\*I know I skipped an episode, but I couldn't go through with seeing Hookfang hurt. And I wanted to showcase some of Grim's friends again. I thought it would be something different. On with the story. Review!\*\***

\* \* \*

><p>Grim was filling his pack when Hiccup found him.<p>

"Are you going somewhere?" asked Hiccup.

"I recall having a trip that was postponed because of a certain ban on flight," said Grim. "I want to visit Grim Island before winter."

"Well, I guess this would be the best time to go," said Hiccup. "I mean, between the Outcasts and the Screaming Death, we've really haven't had much time to do anything fun."

"Grindheart, Axewing, and Fearcloak are staying behind," said Grim. "Deathshriek and I will be back in a week." He slung his pack over his shoulder.

"Have fun," said Hiccup.

Grim put his hand on Hiccup's shoulder. "Everything will be fine."

"Just please be back before Arvin Dale's fire arrives," said Hiccup.

"What's so special about Arvin Dale's fire?" Grim asked.

"It's when the Flightmare comes," said Hiccup. "It's a dragon that comes around every ten years."

"I will return before then," said Grim. "I am guessing you want to get a close up look at this dragon."

Grim walked out of the house and went to the Great Hall. He noticed Mulch and Bucket.

"Mulch, Bucket, is there something you need help with?" Grim asked.

Mulch elbowed Bucket. "Ask him, Bucket."

Grim waited while Bucket twiddled his fingers.

"I was wondering if - if -," said Bucket.

"Out with it, Bucket," said Mulch.



"Stop making me nervous!" Bucket cried. "He scares me!"

Grim blinked. He was amazed that Bucket was afraid of him so much.  
"What is it, Bucket?"

"I was wondering if there was something you could bring back from your island to make paint with," said Bucket.

"What colors would you like, Bucket?" Grim asked. "I know of several berries that can be used. Also there are shells that can be used as well. I will see what I can find."

"Oh, thank you, Grim!" Bucket said.

Grim finished getting his supplies and hopped onto Deathshriek.  
"Are you ready?"

Deathshriek grunted he was ready.

They left Berk and flew to Grim Island. The sun had long set when they reached Grim Island. The Shooting Stars were dancing in the air, their spots lighting up the sky.

"Land in the glade," Grim told Deathshriek.

They landed in the glade. As they did, a cry went up that was echoed across the island.

"Grim and Deathshriek are back!" was what they were roaring.

Every Sunsetter and Shooting Star flocked to the glade. The sky was colored with the pinks, oranges, and yellows of the Sunsetters along with a few patches of midnight blue from the Shooting Stars.

"Grim, you're back!"

"Are you here to stay?"

"Where are your friends?"

"I'm so happy you're home!"

Grim smiled as he was knocked to the ground and licked by the affectionate dragons. Deathshriek was surrounded by the Shooting Stars and were warbling quickly.

Grim fought to his feet. "I will be staying for a week."

"You're not staying?" whined a Sunsetter.

"No," said Grim. "I made a new home on Berk."

A Shooting Star turned to Grim. "You will have to tell us what has happened since you left."

"And I will," said Grim.

Dawn had come and gone when Grim and Deathshriek finished telling the dragons of Grim Island about their time after they left the island. Deathshriek made it well-known to the other dragons that Grim fancied a certain Scottish princess.

"\*\*I will find a new dragon to ride,\*\*" Grim had said flatly.

Deathshriek only laughed.

After the stories were told, Grim decided to go to their old cave to sleep for a few hours. One of the other dragons had a different idea. It followed Grim back to the cave.

"\*\*You are a very strange and brave human, Grim Frosti,\*\*" it said to him.

Grim looked at the Shooting Star that had followed him. It was a mature male with plenty of vigor left in him that was apparent when his spots lit up the night. The glossy sheen of a hatchling had long left his scales and was now a velvety midnight blue color.

"\*\*You are destined for great things,\*\*" the dragon added.

Grim smiled softly. "\*\*You are not the first dragon to tell me this. I do not see how.\*\*"

The dragon chuckled. "\*\*Many do not see it. You think too little of yourself.\*\*"

Grim prepared the place where he tended to sleep.

"\*\*One day you will be a great hero,\*\*" said the Shooting Star, turning to leave.

Grim looked at his retreating tail and blinked in surprise.

\* \* \*

><p>Grim slept through most of the afternoon and woke when it was dark and the stars were out. Having slept through the afternoon, he was wide awake. He looked over at Deathshriek and noticed he was sleeping.<p>

Grim got up and saw the Shooting Stars were still out dancing. The Shooting Stars noticed him and landed in front of him.

"\*\*It has been a long time since you joined us in a dance,\*\*" one of them said.

"\*\*Then may I have this dance?\*\*" Grim asked.

They warbled and bowed. Grim bowed as well. They took off, one hovering a few feet from the ground. Grim reached up and took the paw the Shooting Star offered him. While only holding hands, Grim was taken from the ground, his feet hanging freely in the air.

"\*\*Ready?\*\*" the Shooting Star asked him once they were joined the

others in the air.

Grim nodded.

When he first came to the island, after he recovered enough of his strength, he and the dragons came up with a game.

The Shooting Star flung Grim into the air. Grim twisted around and was caught under the arms by another Shooting Star. It swooped down so Grim's feet could brush the tops of the trees. He was then flipped up so he landed on the back of the dragon. Grim carefully stood up on the dragon's back. He jumped and let himself fly back to the dragon's tail where he hung on.

\*\*\*Let go.\*\*\*

Grim obeyed the Shooting Star below him and let go. He dropped down and was caught in the dragon's front legs and hugged as the dragon spiraled in the air. Grim put his arms around the Shooting Star's neck and pulled himself onto the dragon's back.

\*\*\*Higher,\*\*\* Grim told the Shooting Star.

The Shooting Star complied, climbing up to the clouds.

When Grim deemed they were high enough, he jumped. He used all his strength to go into a spiral dive.

\*\*\*Do you have any sense of self-preservation?\*\*\*

Grim opened his eyes and saw Deathshriek diving beside him.

\*\*\*Why should I worry when I know you will not let me fall?\*\*\* Grim asked.

Deathshriek smiled and reached out to Grim. He tossed him over his shoulder and opened his wings. Grim yelled happily as Deathshriek pulled up and barrel-rolled.

\*\*\*Some of us are trying to sleep!\*\*\* a Sunsetter yelled from the ground.

Grim simply cackled.

\* \* \*

><p>It took a couple days for Grim to get back into hunting for himself. The dragons would have gladly helped him, but Grim wanted to keep his skills sharp. He went fishing in the streams and rivers and hunted in the forests for wild boar.<p>

On the third day, Grim went to a place where he hadn't been in since the night he brought Hiccup and Stoick to the island; his forge. Grim's forge was nothing remarkable. He and Deathshriek had created it when Grim needed clothes. Deathshriek had dug a hole and Grim had lined it with rocks. There was a flat rock for an anvil, several primitive hammers, and a knife made out of a sharpened dragon spine.

Grim found the stash of scales he couldn't bring back with him to

Berk last time. There were several colors, including a rare red and violet mix on the same scale.

Thinking about the different colors of scales he had, he remembered Bucket requested anything he could use to make paint with. Grim had three days before he had to be back. He decided to begin to look for anything that could be used for paint.

Grim went down to the beach to look for shells. He walked the beach in nothing but his dragon scale pants. The cold waves touched Grim's ankles while he picked up some shells.

The wind ghosted over Grim's pale skin. He put his head up and looked at the sky. There was a storm coming.

"\*\*You sense it as well,\*\*" Deathshriek said.

Grim turned to him. "\*\*It is going to hit the island in two days.\*\*"

"\*\*We will have to cut our visit short or we will be stuck here until it passes over,\*\*" said Deathshriek.

"\*\*I promised Hiccup I would be back before Arvin Dale's fire, anyway, whatever that means,\*\*" said Grim.

"\*\*Did Hiccup tell you about this dragon?\*\*" asked Deathshriek.

"\*\*Only that it is called the Flightmare,\*\*" Grim answered. "\*\*I am curious to know what it is exactly.\*\*"

"\*\*So am I,\*\*" said Deathshriek. "\*\*Right now, we should tell the others we plan to leave earlier than expected. The Sunsetters will not be pleased.\*\*"

"\*\*They will have to put up with it,\*\*" said Grim.

\* \* \*

><p>They returned to Berk a day later to avoid the storm.<p>

Grim found Mulch and Bucket tending some of the animals.

"Grim, you're back early," said Mulch.

"Yes," said Grim. He held up a bag. "I brought these for Bucket to make paint with."

Bucket took the bag from Grim. "Thank you, Grim!" He hugged Grim. "I'll paint you something nice."

"You don't have to, Bucket," said Grim.

Grim and Deathshriek then went to look for Grindheart. Grim needed to speak with him about what happened with the Screaming Death.

They found him in the caves where he spent the sunny days.

"\*\*Grindheart,\*\*" Grim called when they entered the caves.

The Whispering Death slithered into view. "\*\*Grim, welcome home. How was your visit? You are back earlier than I expected you to be. Did I sleep a full day away?\*\*"

"\*\*No, we came back early because of a coming storm,\*\*" said Grim. "\*\*I wanted to speak with you about something. It concerns the Screaming Death.\*\*"

Grindheart squirmed. "\*\*The Screaming Death, as you call it, is a feared dragon among the Whispering Deaths. They are superior to us when it comes to tunneling because of their size. The one we saw was a young one.\*\*"

"\*\*A young one?\*\*" Grim and Deathshriek cried.

"\*\*That means it's still growing,\*\*" said Grim. "\*\*How large can they get?\*\*"

Grindheart shook his head. "\*\*I never saw a full grown one with my own eyes. I have been told they can be the size of small mountains.\*\*"

"\*\*I do not wish to think about it,\*\*" said Deathshriek.

"\*\*That makes two of us,\*\*" said Grim.

"\*\*Three. And it gets worse,\*\*" said Grindheart.

"\*\*How can it get worse?\*\*" asked Grim.

"\*\*When I was digging a new channel for the water for your well, I found eggshells.\*\*"

"\*\*Of course you would,\*\*" said Deathshriek. "\*\*They were born down there.\*\*"

"\*\*There were more than four,\*\*" Grindheart said. "\*\*There were at least three dozen eggshells. The Screaming Death and the Whispering Deaths are cannibalistic. They know the taste of dragon.\*\*"

Grim shuddered.

"\*\*That is what happens when there is no adult to hunt for them,\*\*" said Deathshriek. "\*\*It also happens when food is scarce and dragons are desperate. It is a terrible and sad thing to happen.\*\*"

Grim looked at Grindheart. "\*\*Have you ever been that desperate?\*\*"

"\*\*No,\*\*" replied Grindheart. "\*\*And before you ask, if I would have killed Toothless, I would not have eaten him. We Whispering Deaths are not like that. That is something a Murderous Dragon would do.\*\*"

Grim nodded.

\* \* \*

><p>Their last stop was the house. Grim walked in and found it empty.<p>

"\*\*They must be at the Academy,\*\*" said Deathshriek.

Grim grunted and went to his bed.

Deathshriek lay on the floor. "\*\*You seem troubled.\*\*"

"\*\*And you are not?\*" Grim asked. "\*\*There are four cannibalistic dragons flying around out there and one of them can swallow some of us in one bite.\*\*"

"\*\*There is little we can do about it now,\*\*" said Deathshriek. "\*\*Let's take things one day at a time. I believe we have a problem with a Flightmare to deal with first.\*\*"

Grim wasn't sure how long he was sleeping before he was woken by something jumping on his back.

"\*\*Grim!\*\*"

Grim swung and hit something to the floor.

Deathshriek laughed from his slab.

Grim sat up and looked at Fearcloak sprawled on the floor. "\*\*I am so sorry.\*\*"

"\*\*I'm okay,\*\*" said Fearcloak, sitting up and getting his bearings. "\*\*Ruffnut beat me with a stick before.\*\*"

Grim got up and knelt beside Fearcloak. "\*\*You startled me.\*\*"

"\*\*I was so happy to see you,\*\*" said Fearcloak.

Grim smiled.

"Grim, you're back." Hiccup and Toothless were standing at the top of the stairs. "You're early."

"There was a storm coming and I told you we would be back in a week," said Grim. "I did not want to be stuck."

"Good," said Hiccup. "You can help with the final preparations before the Flightmare comes."

Hiccup and Grim and their dragons walked to the Academy.

"You missed a lot this week," said Hiccup. "We could have really needed you. Hookfang was so sick we thought he was going to die. His fire went out."

"What?" Grim asked.

"It's okay," said Hiccup. "The Fire Worm Queen we found gave him a dose of her venom and it was enough to restart his fire."

"That is good news," said Grim. "Perhaps I shouldn't leave Berk anymore if things like this become frequent occurrence."

"You have a life, too," said Hiccup. "You can't always be here to help us. Sometimes we have to help ourselves."

"\*\*Not exactly reassuring,\*\*" said Deathshriek.

Grim gave him a glare in good humor.

The first thing that greeted them was Astrid yelling. "You want some of this?" There was a loud thunk as her axe blade sank into a target. "That's right! Who's next?"

"I-I'm pretty sure that you, yep, I think you got them," said Hiccup. "All of them."

They looked at the destroyed targets. Grim wondered if there were any left for the rest of the riders to use for practice.

"Astrid's been killing inanimate objects all day," Fishlegs told them.

"She's really wound up about the Flightmare," said Hiccup.

"Ha!" Grim looked over at Snotlout. He was casually leaned against the wall. "Too bad she's wasting her time. When the Flightmare comes, the Hoffersons freeze. Right, Astrid? I mean you are a -."

Astrid hurled her axe at Snotlout. It stuck in the wall right in front of his face.

"Hofferson," Snotlout finished weakly.

"Okay, okay," said Hiccup, "let's take a deep breath. Just because Arvin Dale's fire is coming, doesn't mean the Flightmare is, too."

"Sure it does," said Fishlegs. "Every ten years the sky lights up with Arvin Dale's fire and when it does the Flightmare appears. Its spectral glow and banshee-like scream are unmistakable."

Astrid looked at Hiccup. "You were saying?"

Hiccup couldn't look at Astrid and looked at Fishlegs instead. "Thank you, Fishlegs. Your extensive knowledge of the Flightmare is. . . timely, if nothing else."

"I do fancy myself to be Berk's leading authority on the subject," Fishlegs said proudly. He opened the book he was holding. "Here's a few more fun facts. Legend has it that the Flightmare is so terrifying, it actually freezes its prey in its tracks."

"Yeah!" Snotlout chimed in. "Just ask Frozen Finn Hofferson. Ha-ha! Right, Astrid?"

Astrid let out a war cry and threw Snotlout on the ground and placed her boot on his face. She pulled her axe from the wall. "You think it's funny, Snotlout? You think it's a joke that my family name was ruined by that dragon?"

"Well, I used to just a couple minutes ago, but now I can see how it

could be upsetting you," Snotlout replied.

Ruffnut and Tuffnut came carting food to the bunker.

"Did you guys hear?" Tuffnut asked. "The Flightmare is coming."

Hiccup got between the twins and Astrid. He put his hands up. "Uh, guys, really trying not to talk about it."

"Hate to break it to you, but that's the only thing anyone's talking about," said Ruffnut.

"Well that and Astrid's uncle," said Tuffnut.

"Hey!" Snotlout yelled from his place on the ground. "A little sensitivity here. Can I get up now?"

Astrid removed her foot. "Ugh! Whatever." She got onto Stormfly and left.

Hiccup turned to them. "Well, thanks a lot, guys," he said sarcastically.

"No problem," said Tuffnut. "If you don't need us anymore, we got to get ready for the end of the world. See ya!" The twins ran into the bunker.

\* \* \*

><p>Later that evening, Hiccup and Toothless went out to find Astrid adjusting Stormfly's saddle.<p>

"I don't want to hear it, Hiccup," Astrid said. "I've waited my entire life for a chance to clear my family's name and you're not going to stop me."

"Who said anything about stopping you?" Hiccup innocently asked.

Astrid gave him a sideways glance and walked away, Stormfly following her.

"Okay, Astrid, I have to stop you," said Hiccup. He ran after her. "Look, nobody loves a new and terrifying dragon like I do. But I need you guys here to protect Berk. If that thing does show up, it's gonna take all of us to fight it off."

"Not if it never gets to here," said Astrid. "Come on, Hiccup. Don't tell me you haven't been dreaming about the Flightmare. Going after it? Learning about it? Training it?"

"Well, you know, Astrid, uh, training dragons isn't the only thing I think about," Hiccup said.

"Are you actually saying that to me with a straight face?" Astrid asked.

Hiccup was about to answer when he was interrupted by Fishlegs.



"There you are, Hiccup! I did the research you asked for."

"Uh, not now, Fishlegs," Hiccup said quietly.

"But I have the path of the Flightmare right here on this map," Fishlegs said, holding the rolled paper up. "For generations it's gone through the northern swamp on the way to the village. Same route every time. If I could only figure out why, we might be able to stop it."

"Fishlegs, Astrid doesn't want to talk about the Flightmare," Hiccup said.

"Of course she does!" said Fishlegs.

"Sure, I do," Astrid said cheerfully.

"See? So as I was saying, if you want to get close to it, you're going to have to be stealthy, virtually invisible in the dark."

Astrid listened carefully. "Kind of like a Night Fury?"

"Exactly like a Night Fury," said Fishlegs.

Astrid climbed up onto Toothless. "So, when do we leave?"

Hiccup did not like this idea. "As soon as we get Grim. I would feel better if we have two stealthy dragons."

\* \* \*

><p>After getting Grim and Deathshriek and the sun went down, the sky was lit up with colored lights.<p>

"\*\*So this is Arvin Dale's fire,\*\*" Grim said as he flew beside Toothless. "\*\*It is the northern lights.\*\*"

"\*\*It is beautiful,\*\*" said Deathshriek.

"Okay," said Hiccup, "we are going to observe the Flightmare, Astrid. We're going to see what we can learn about it and try to redirect it. If we can't, we are falling back to town. Understand?"

"Sure," Astrid said from where she sat on Toothless' saddle behind Hiccup.

"Say the words 'I understand, Hiccup.'"

"Fine," Astrid said flatly. "I understand, Hiccup."

Grim heard his brother add sarcastically, "Well, that just instills me with confidence."

"If anything goes wrong, I want you to take Toothless and get back to the village," Grim called to them. "Deathshriek and I will distract it long enough for you to escape."

"What about you?" Hiccup asked.

Grim simply smirked.

"Yeah, what am I thinking?" Hiccup muttered. "There's the northern swamp."

They heard a moaning roar.

"Sounds like we're getting close," said Hiccup.

"Good," said Astrid. "I can't wait to see this thing."

"You won't have to wait long," said Hiccup. "Remember, observe only!"

There was another moaning roar and they saw something glowing in the clouds. The bright light drove Toothless and Deathshriek down, unable to see. They circled around.

"Okay," Hiccup said. "Well, it certainly lives up to the hype."

Astrid jumped off of Toothless.

"Astrid! What are you doing?" Hiccup called.

"What do you think I'm doing?" Astrid shouted back once she landed on the ground. She pulled out her axe. "Defending Berk and my family honor. We'll see who's a coward."

"Family honor is going to get her killed!" Grim shouted.

"Leave Berk now and never come back!" Astrid yelled to the Flightmare.

The Flightmare hovered in the air above her. Its blue glow lit up the night sky like the northern lights.

"Here I am, ungodly beast! Fearless Astrid Hofferson! Come and get me if you dare!"

The Flightmare swooped down and attacked. Instead of breathing fire, it was some sort of mist.

Astrid froze.

"Astrid!" Hiccup and Grim shouted.

The Flightmare came around for another pass. Hiccup went down to get Astrid while Grim went to intercept the Flightmare. It was their first good look at the dragon. It had a large head and mouth with a single horn on its nose, large wings with tendrils that gave it a ghostly appearance and split tail. It roared at him and lit up so brightly that Deathshriek and Grim were forced to the ground with Hiccup and Toothless. The Flightmare swooped down. Hiccup pushed Astrid to the ground.

"Okay, gotta go! Gotta go!" Hiccup pulled Astrid onto Toothless.

Toothless and Deathshriek flew up into the clouds.

When the Flightmare couldn't find them, it turned around and flew off in the opposite direction.

"I think we lost him," said Hiccup.

They landed. Hiccup turned around and gave Astrid a shake.

"Astrid!" he called.

Grim jumped off Deathshriek and ran over to them. Both brothers noticed Astrid looked wet.

"What happened?" Astrid asked, putting a hand to her head.

"The Flightmare sprayed you with some kind of mist," said Hiccup. "It paralyzed you."

"It froze me," Astrid said in shock.

"I guess the good news is the effects are only temporary," said Hiccup.

"Long enough for it to strike," said Grim. "An excellent way to catch prey."

"I knew my uncle wasn't afraid of that dragon," said Astrid. "He was paralyzed by it."

"There is something else," said Grim.

"What?" Hiccup asked.

"When Deathshriek and I tried to keep it from Astrid, it roared something strange," Grim replied. "It called us thieves."

"Thieves?" Astrid questioned. "It's the one trespassing and terrorizing our island."

"Either way, we must be cautious," said Grim. "It sees us as a threat for some reason."

"Can you talk to it?" Hiccup asked.

"I don't know if I can," said Grim.

"What do you mean?" Astrid said. "It's a dragon."

"I cannot speak and reason with every dragon we come across," Grim shot back. "Just because you can speak to other Vikings, doesn't mean they will listen."

"Calm down," Hiccup told both of them. "Let's just focus on the Flightmare."

They took off.

"Uh, let me guess," said Astrid. "We're falling back to town?"

"No," Hiccup replied. "We're following the Flightmare. We're the only thing between that dragon and Berk."

Astrid punched the air. "Yes!"

They followed the Flightmare.

They came to the river and stopped.

"What in the name of Thor?" Hiccup said.

The river was glowing like the Flightmare.

"Glowing algae," said Hiccup.

They landed next to the river. The riders went to the side of the river. Hiccup knelt down and put his hand in the water.

"The glow must be some sort of reaction to Arvin Dale's fire," Hiccup said.

They looked up at the glowing sky.

"This must be what the Flightmare is following," said Hiccup. "That's why it always takes the same path to the village."

Astrid hummed. "Not getting it."

"Did you ever try to get between Snotlout and a bowl of mutton?" Hiccup asked.

"Yeah, that's something you only do once," replied Astrid.

There was a soft roar. Hiccup shoved Astrid behind a rock, Grim quickly following them. They peered over it and saw the Flightmare drinking from the river.

"It thinks we are trying to steal its food," Grim said as the Flightmare began to glow brightly. "It believes we are a threat to its survival. That is why it called us thieves."

The Flightmare noticed them and flew over.

"And speaking of threats," said Astrid.

They backed away.

"Quick!" said Hiccup. "We need to get to Toothless up in the air so we can hide."

"Yeah," said Astrid. She pointed to Toothless. "Don't think that's gonna happen."

Toothless and Deathshriek were eating the algae from the river.

"Oh, Toothless," said Hiccup.

Toothless began to glow dark blue. Deathshriek also began to glow a brighter shade of blue than Toothless, but his white facial markings were visible.

"\*\*Thieves!\*\*" roared the Flightmare.

They jumped up on their dragons and took off.

Hiccup looked behind him and saw the Flightmare following them. "It's right behind us."

"What are we gonna do?" Astrid asked.

"Toothless, to the clouds!" Hiccup ordered.

Deathshriek and Toothless flew into the clouds.

Grim gave a small shake of his head. The dragons were glowing too brightly. They would be seen even in the clouds.

"Do you think we lost him?" Astrid asked.

The Flightmare came up through the clouds and roared at them.

"Nope," Hiccup replied.

Toothless tried to get away, but the Flightmare cut him off and glowed brightly. Blinded, Toothless began to plummet to the ground.

"Toothless!" Hiccup yelled.

They hit the ground hard. Hiccup and Astrid rolled off Toothless' back. There was a scream and Deathshriek and Grim hit the ground a second later. Grim got to his feet and extended his dragon claws.

"If it wants to fight, I'll give it a fight," Grim growled.

The Flightmare came down at them and shot its mist at Toothless.

"Toothless, roll!" Hiccup ordered.

Toothless got out of the way of the mist. He then fired several plasma blasts at the Flightmare.

"Toothless!" Hiccup yelled, running over to his dragon to get him to stop.

The Flightmare roared and prepared to attack.

"Hey!"

The Flightmare roared as Astrid's axe bounced off its head. It gave another roar and went after her. Astrid tumbled and flipped, using the landscape to her advantage. The Flightmare fired its mist.

"Astrid!" Toothless swooped in and Hiccup grabbed Astrid.

Deathshriek fired a blast of blue fire in the Flightmare's direction.

"\*\*It's getting to the point where deterring it is not the best option,\*\*" said Deathshriek. "\*\*I may have to fight him. Are you ready for a dragon fight if it comes down to it?\*\*"

Grim nodded and grunted.

"Hiccup, look!" Astrid pointed to a small cave.

Toothless and Deathshriek ducked into the cave and the Flightmare passed them. They looked out to see where the Flightmare went. It roared and kept flying.

The glow faded from their dragons.

"At least the glow wears off," said Hiccup. "Toothless, sky."

They flew up in the air and flew after the Flightmare.

"Okay, how do we stop the Flightmare before it reaches the village?" Astrid asked.

Hiccup looked over his shoulder. "Fishlegs."

"How's he gonna help?" Astrid asked.

"By bringing you some reinforcements!"

Astrid and Grim turned around to see Fishlegs riding Meatlug and Stormfly flying beside them.

"Stormfly!" Astrid jumped off of Toothless and onto Stormfly's saddle. "Good to see you, girl."

"Fishlegs, the Academy is supposed to be on lockdown," said Hiccup.

"I know, but I was following the stream because I think I found a way to keep the Flightmare from reaching town." Fishlegs pointed to the bend in the river where it came close to the cliff.

"We cut a new channel for the river," Hiccup said.

"And divert the flow of glowing algae out to the sea," Fishlegs finished.

"Fishlegs, you are brilliant," said Grim. "Do not let any other tell you different."

"Toothless, Stormfly, Meatlug, Deathshriek, it's time to do a little emergency landscaping," said Hiccup.

They followed the river and the Flightmare.

"A live Flightmare," said Fishlegs in terror. "It's â€" it's â€" it's â€"."

"It's mine," Astrid finished.

She got in front of the Flightmare and had Stormfly fire a shot of fire in its face.

Hiccup got ahead of them. "Okay, bud, time to do what we came here for."

The boys and their dragons swooped down to the river. Toothless started by firing two plasma blasts and began diverting the river. Meatlug began using lava blasts to block up the old channel of the river. Deathshriek followed Toothless and let loose a blue fireball. They kept repeating the process while Astrid kept the Flightmare occupied. They were almost finished when the Flightmare noticed Fishlegs.

"Good girl, Meatlug," Fishlegs praised as Meatlug finished her work.

The Flightmare roared at Fishlegs and sprayed its mist on Fishlegs. Fishlegs fell off of Meatlug.

"Hiccup!" Astrid yelled. "The Flightmare got Fishlegs!"

Astrid and Grim got between Fishlegs and the Flightmare and fired at it. Toothless scooped up Fishlegs and plopped him back onto Meatlug's saddle. The Gronkle hurried to get out of harm's way.

Fishlegs shook himself, the effects of the mist wearing off. "What just happened to me?"

"The Flightmare, its mist temporarily paralyzes you," Hiccup answered.

"Thank Thor," breathed Fishlegs. "I need my legs. They're in my name after all."

Hiccup and Fishlegs continued to work on the channel while Grim and Astrid kept the Flightmare at bay. Astrid was thrown off of Stormfly at one point. The Flightmare went after her.

"Look out!" she yelled as she ran to Hiccup and Fishlegs. Astrid jumped onto Toothless' back and they flew off.

"Okay, guys, we need to keep cutting that channel," said Hiccup.

The Flightmare hovered over where they had been.

"But the Flightmare is guarding it," said Hiccup.

Deathshriek flew to them.

"Then what should we do?" Grim asked.

"I think I have a way to distract it." Astrid jumped down to Stormfly. "The algae. Let's give the Flightmare a taste of its own medicine."

"Astrid, lead the way," said Hiccup.

The four dragons went down to the river.

"Time for a little midnight snack," said Astrid.

Stormfly got a mouthful of algae.

"Chow down, guys," Hiccup encouraged as Toothless got a mouthful of his own.

Meatlug and Deathshriek ate the algae as well.

The four dragons began glowing. Stormfly was glowing yellow and Meatlug was glowing a light green color.

"I always knew this was her color," said Fishlegs. "We're going to knit you a matching blanket when we get home, Meatlug."

"Okay. It's time to see who the real coward is," said Astrid.

The four dragons glowed brightly and surrounded the Flightmare. The Flightmare was unable to look at them and turned it try to get away. Blinded, it fell to the ground with a loud thud.

"Toothless, let's finish off that channel," said Hiccup.

Toothless flew down and went the length of the new channel. With one final plasma blast, the river was diverted into the ocean, a glowing waterfall falling over the cliff.

The Flightmare got up and saw the river had taken a different course. It flew after and out to sea. The four dragons landed on the cliff and watched it fly away.

"We did it," said Astrid.

Hiccup let out a sigh of relief. "Now let's get back home before anyone notices we're gone."

They made their way back to the village.

As they approached the village, they heard the sound of a horn and several people yelling. They landed in the village and saw Stoick, sword in hand, and Gobber staring at them.

"Hiccup, slap me in the face," said Gobber. "Your dragons are glowing. Must still be dreaming."

"Gobber, you're wide awake," said Hiccup, getting off of Toothless. "And they are glowing. Long story. The good news is we drove the Flightmare away."

Stoick's face lit up. "You did?" He put his hand on Hiccup's shoulder. "Well done, Hiccup. Well done!"

Stoick turned to address the village. "Everyone, you can come out of your homes. The Flightmare is gone for good."

People opened their doors and came out.

"Excuse me, I have an announcement to make," Hiccup said, but there was a little too much chatter from the rest of the villagers.



Grim put his hand on Hiccup's shoulder and gave him a smile. In a stronger voice, Grim announced. "We learned much about the Flightmare tonight and we will tell you all later." He turned and held out his hand to Astrid. She took it and Grim pulled her to his side for all the villagers to see. "But the most important thing we learned was that Fearless Finn Hofferson was indeed fearless. Just like all the Hoffersons."

Gobber came up to Astrid. "Sounds like you did your uncle proud, lass."

"Now maybe we can just enjoy Arvin Dale's fire," said Stoick.

The entire village cheered.

Astrid turned Grim to face her. "Thanks for saying that."

"You are truly fearless, Astrid," Grim told her. "Do not forget it. But also, do not forget your sense."

Astrid smiled. "I'll try not to."

"You're nowhere near as dense as Snotlout and the twins," Hiccup chimed in.

Grim glanced up. "Speaking of the twins."

Barf and Belch landed in the village.

"I want a glowing dragon," said Tuffnut.

"Yeah, me, too," said Ruffnut.

"Put that on Snotlout's list," Tuffnut told her with a smirk.

Ruffnut smirked back.

\* \* \*

><p><strong>When I first saw the Tunnel Vision episode with only four dragons out of how many dozen surviving, my first thought was, "Oh, man, they ate each other." Sick and wrong, I know, but how else would you explain all those hatched eggs and only four dragons surviving, especially one as large as the Screaming Death? It made sense to me that Grindheart would know something about Screaming Deaths, being a Whispering Death himself.<strong>

\*\*I know I took the speech at the end of the episode and gave it to Grim. It only made more sense to me to have Grim give it, since he has done public speaking in the past.\*\*

\*\*I hope I'm not making Grim look too perfect. I'm trying to show that he is very intelligent with his knowledge of dragons and he still remembers his lessons and manners from when he was a prince.\*\*

\*\*Thank you to the person who gave me such a great review for the last chapter. And thank you for taking a guess at my challenge. However it is not Harry Potter, Danny Phantom, or Code: LYOKO. All of them are good guesses, but the challenge remains. As for the question about how old Grim is, I never gave an exact age. I imagine him being very close to Hiccup's age with maybe a month or two difference between birthdays. As for bromance, you'll see it now and then.\*\*

\*\*CHALLENGE: After this installment of the Dragon Trainer, Dragon Speaker series ends, I am doing another installment that will be a crossover. What story do you think I'll be crossing HTTYD with?  
\*\*

\*\*Previous answers: \*\*

\*\*Eragon\*\*

\*\*Harry Potter\*\*

\*\*Danny Phantom\*\*

\*\*Code: LYOKO\*\*

\* \* \*

><p>Grim got up and found Deathshriek was not around. The Baleful Banshee probably went to find himself some fresh breakfast.<p>

Grim walked outside and found Thornado.

\*\*\*Good morning, Thornado,\*\*" said Grim.

\*\*\*Good morning, Grim. Where are you off to?\*\*\*"

\*\*\*Dragon training,\*\*" said Grim. \*\*\*We are practicing our rescue skills today.\*\*\*"

\*\*\*That's nice,\*\*" said Thornado. \*\*\*I was hoping to have something to do today. Stoick is busy with some human problem. I don't know when he'll be back.\*\*\*"

\*\*\*You are bored.\*\*\*"

\*\*\*Very.\*\*\*"

Grim smirked and pounced onto Thornado.

\*\*\*Ah, you sneak!\*\*\*" Thornado roared good-naturedly.

They began to wrestle. Thornado was surprised at the strength the small human possessed. Grim lived with dragons and it was clear he wrestled with them as well. Thornado was happy to oblige in the horse-play, or dragon-play.

Grim pushed Thornado back and tried to pin him, something that was impossible to do with a dragon Thornado's size. Thornado pulled Grim off with his long tail and onto the ground. Grim got back up and jumped onto Thornado's back. Thornado bucked him off. The dragon went

to pin Grim and heard Grim yell in pain. Thornado quickly backed away.

"\*\*Grim?\*\*"

Grim lay there, panting in pain.

"\*\*Grim!\*\*"

"Grim!" Stoick ran up to the house. "What happened?"

"\*\*It was an accident,\*\*" Thornado warbled.

Stoick knelt down next to Grim. "Are you all right? Where are you hurt?"

"\*\*Grim, I'm so sorry,\*\*" said Thornado.

Stoick pushed Thornado away.

"It is not too bad," Grim said through gritted teeth. He carefully pulled up his tunic to reveal a Thornado paw shaped mark on his pale back. "Thornado got overexcited."

"Let's try not to have that happen again," said Stoick. "Are you sure you're all right?"

Grim got to his feet. "Yes. I won't be participating in today's training exercise."

Thornado grumbled softly.

Grim gave Thornado a smile. "\*\*It is fine, Thornado. It was an accident. I should have been more careful. You are bigger than the dragons I usually wrestle.\*\*"

Thornado nudged Grim as Deathshriek returned. Deathshriek looked at Grim.

"\*\*What happened?\*\*"

"\*\*I'm fine. We need to get to training.\*\*" Grim got onto Deathshriek's back with some difficulty.

\* \* \*

><p>They were on the sea stack, waiting for Fishlegs to give the signal for Snotlout to go. Fishlegs looked at the sundial and gave the signal. Hookfang took off and swooped down to the rowboat with the training dummy. Snotlout picked the dummy out of the boat.<p>

"Yes, Hookfang! Victory loop!"

Hookfang turned and flew passed the other riders on the sea stack.

"You know, I hate to admit it, but Snotlout actually looks like he's worked on his rescue training," said Hiccup.

Hookfang looped around and dove for the water.

"Hookfang!" screamed Snotlout.

Hookfang plunged into the water.

"Uh, let's not get ahead of ourselves," said Astrid.

Hookfang surfaced and flew up the side of the sea stack. He landed in front of the other riders.

"Another victim saved," Snotlout said proudly.

The dummy's head fell off. Snotlout yelled and threw it on the ground.

"Yeah," said Fishlegs. "You got the victim part right."

"Shut up, Fishlegs!" Snotlout said. "Big deal! So his head fell off. It's not like he's on fire or anything."

Hookfang perked up. "\*\*\*That's what I forgot.\*\*" He set the dummy on fire and proceeded to stamp it out. He and Snotlout then looked behind them at the other riders.

Fishlegs was about to open his mouth.

"Shut up, Fishlegs," Snotlout hissed.

Astrid went next. Stormfly shot spines at the side of the sea stack and Astrid climbed them like a ladder.

"Great work, Astrid," Hiccup said.

"Great work?" Snotlout scoffed. "Try lame work. Hello! Flying dragon? It might be a little quicker to get to the top of the sea stack."

"What if your victim is trapped on the side of a cliff and your dragon can't get you close enough? You ever think of that?"

"Yes! No. Shut up, Astrid."

"I will have to tell Grindheart that trick," said Grim.

"Okay, so, uh, Fishlegs, looks like you're up," said Hiccup.

Fishlegs gave Meatlug a pat to get her attention and pointed up. Meatlug responded by flying straight up.

"I call this the stop."

Meatlug stopped in the air.

"Drop."

Meatlug fell.

Hookfang looked and saw she was going to fall on him and Snotlout.

"\*\*Whoa!\*\*" He got out of the way, throwing Snotlout off.

"Oh, no," Snotlout said looking up at the incoming Gronkle. He yelled and put his hands up to protect him. When there was no pain, he opened his eyes to see Meatlug stopped before she squashed him.

"And hover," finished Fishlegs.

"I like it, Fishlegs," Hiccup said.

"Oh, come on!" Snotlout said. "That's not rescuing. That's falling."

Fishlegs had an amused look on his face. "Actually, this is falling."

Meatlug fell onto Snotlout.

"Hookfang," Snotlout called from underneath the dragon.  
"Rescue!"

Hookfang looked back and jumped off the sea stack. "\*\*Help yourself.\*\*"

"Thank you," Snotlout said sarcastically.

Hiccup turned to the twins. "Okay, guys. Do you want to show us your rescue skill?"

"Sure," replied Tuffnut.

The twins faced forward on their dragon and stared intently.

The others watched them.

"So, let's see it," Hiccup said slowly.

"Uh, you are seeing it," Tuffnut said.

"Pretty cool, huh?" said Ruffnut.

"Our rescue skill is not falling off the sea stack," said Tuffnut.  
"That way no actual rescue is necessary."

"Ta-da!" Ruffnut threw her arms out and hit Tuffnut in the head, knocking him off Belch and the sea stack. "We're still working out the kinks."

Grim leaned over on Deathshriek to Hiccup, ignoring the throb in his side. "It's a start."

Hiccup fought to keep the smirk off his face.

Hiccup was up next. There were targets set up on several sea stacks. Toothless flew at them.

"Barrel roll!" Hiccup ordered. "Multiple blast!"

Toothless rolled in the air and fired his plasma blasts. Each blast destroyed a target. They then flew back to the other riders.

"\*\*Nice flying,\*\*" Toothless said to Hiccup when he patted his head.

The other riders were staring in amazement.

"Stop oohing!" barked Snotlout. "That's not even a rescue skill!"

"Of course it is," said Fishlegs. "You always need cover fire during a rescue. Everyone knows that." He turned to Hiccup and applauded. "Very impressive, Hiccup."

"Hey, Fishlegs," said Snotlout. "Do you need help getting your nose out of Hiccup's â€"."

"Snotlout!" barked Hiccup.

"It's okay, Hiccup," said Fishlegs. "He's just mad because he was dead last in the rescue competition. But what else is new?"

"What?" yelled Snotlout. "Grim didn't even go yet."

"And I will not be," said Grim. "I am unable to do much flying today."

"Chicken," muttered Snotlout none too subtly.

Grim reached back and pulled up his tunic to show the bruise Thornado gave him. "I was wrestling with Thornado." He pulled down his tunic in such a way to show he did not want to speak about it anymore.

"Guys," said Hiccup. "This isn't a competition."

"Uh, yes, it is," said Tuffnut.

"You know, they say competition is the very essence of life itself," said Ruffnut.

Everyone was silent for a moment.

"It's true." Astrid put her hands on her hips. "Weird that she said it like that, but it's true. It's always a competition."

"We are a team," said Hiccup. "Everyone has a role."

"\*\*Yes,\*\*" Toothless agreed.

"No one person is better or more important than another," Hiccup said.

There was another silent moment before most of the riders started laughing.

Hiccup and Toothless looked at each other.

"You don't really buy that, do you?" Snotlout asked, crossing his arms.

"I do, actually," said Hiccup. "Yes. Wait, do you all feel the way Snotlout does?"

"Uh, Hiccup?" Fishlegs said. "You ride Toothless, a Night Fury. And the Night Fury is at the top of the charts for intelligence, speed, accuracy, and, well, everything."

"\*\*Hey, what about me?\*\*" Deathshriek blurted.

"\*\*Way to make me feel bad,\*\*" Meatlug said.

Fishlegs petted Meatlug. "No offense, girl."

"\*\*And it is fine to insult me?\*\*" Deathshriek continued.

Grim gave Deathshriek a look. "\*\*Will you stop?\*\*"

"You want to know what I think?" Snotlout said.

"No!" everyone yelled.

Snotlout cringed. "I think we'll never know who the best dragon trainer is, because we don't have a level playing field."

Hiccup and Toothless looked at each other.

"\*\*He has a point,\*\*" said Toothless.

"Hang on a second," said Fishlegs. "What if we did have a level playing field? What if we could prove once and for all who's got the skills and who doesn't?"

"Trust me, Fishlegs," said Snotlout, "you don't want that."

"Oh, I think I do," said Fishlegs.

Hiccup and Toothless looked at each other a third time.

"\*\*Oh, boy,\*\*" said Toothless.

"Since you are so keen on proving who is better, then I should find your level playing field," said Grim.

\* \* \*

><p>Back at the Academy, Grim opened a crate to reveal six Terrible Terrors.<p>

"Terrible Terrors?" Snotlout said. "This is your level playing field?"

"Yes," replied Grim. "You will each choose a Terror and have a day to train it."

"And then we'll find out who's best," Fishlegs said smugly.

Snotlout laughed loud enough to echo around the Academy. "Oh, man! I can't keep a straight face."

"I fail to see the humor, Snotlout," said Fishlegs.

Hiccup tried to get in between them. "No, the point of all this is â€". "

However no one was willing to let Hiccup finish a sentence.

"You don't have a chance to win this, Fishface," said Snotlout. "And you want to know why? Because there are readers and there are doers. And while you've got your nose buried in the Book of Dragons, I'm out there, kicking names and taking butts."

Behind him, Astrid stood with her arms crossed. "I think you meant that the other way around."

Snotlout stammered a retort before settling on, "Shut up, Astrid."

"Look, guys, come on," said Hiccup.

"I'll tell you what, Snotlout," said Fishlegs. "You're so confident in your dragon training superiority, why don't we make this interesting?"

Snotlout gave a raspberry. "All ears."

"Losers clean the winner's stall for a month," said Fishlegs.

"Done," said Snotlout.

Astrid crossed her arms as the twins flanked her. "In." She ducked to avoid being caught in a head-butt by the twins as they agreed.

"Come on," said Hiccup. "We're not really gonna do this, are we?"

"You better strap on your helmet," Snotlout told Hiccup. "Because this guy right here, he's bringing the pain."

Snotlout reached down to pick a yellow Terror out of the crate, but a purple one latched onto his wrist and wouldn't let go.

"Guess I'll take this one," Snotlout whimpered. "Bringing the pain."

The other riders selected their Terrors and left.

"Remember, not a competition!" Hiccup yelled after them. He looked at the Terror. "This is really going to go bad in a hurry."

"Perhaps," said Grim with a small nod. "But it could not."

"Why aren't you participating in this?" asked Hiccup.

"I've never had a level playing field," said Grim. "I speak to dragons. It would not be fair. Besides, we are a team. I already know who the best trainer is."

\* \* \*



><p>Later that evening, Grim was sitting at the table. Hiccup had just gone out with Toothless and left the Terror behind. The Terror was entertaining himself with Fearcloak and they were having a tussle on the floor. Deathshriek had decided to take up residence next to the hearth.<p>

"\*\*How is your back?\*\*" Deathshriek asked.

"\*\*I am fine,\*\*" said Grim with a wave of his hand. "\*\*I cannot move very quickly, but I should be better in the morning. If not, I will see Gothi to be certain it is not too serious.\*\*"

Deathshriek gave a nod. He looked at the two small brawling dragons. "\*\*Why did you give the riders Terrors to train? Hiccup is right; we are a team. You even said so yourself.\*\*"

"\*\*The riders need to learn it for themselves,\*\*" said Grim. "\*\*And I did not feel like getting to a screaming match with a bunch of overly competitive Vikings, thank you very much. Besides, even if it turns out to be a complete headache, I am very glad I slipped that purple Terror into the crate. What a nasty disposition that one has. How fitting for it to bite Snotlout.\*\*" Grim smirked.

Deathshriek chuckled. "\*\*A nasty disposition? Or is it obeying a certain dragon speaker?\*\*"

Grim's smirk only widened into a wolfish grin.

Hiccup came back with Toothless.

Grim's grin faded at the sullen look on his brother's face. "Hiccup, what is it?"

Hiccup sighed. "It's this Terror training thing. I'm worried about the others taking as a competition too seriously. I was just as Fishlegs' and Meatlug looked really down. She was tossing a sheep around by herself when we got there. Fishlegs is ignoring her so he can train his Terror to beat Snotlout's."

Grim frowned. "Ignoring the part of Meatlug tossing a sheep, do you think Fishlegs would really do something like that?"

"If you asked me another day, I would say no, but tonight," Hiccup trailed off.

"Let me worry about Meatlug," said Grim. "This is only for one day. I believe she will be fine in the end."

"Are you sure?" Hiccup asked.

"I will speak to her," Grim said, motioning for Hiccup to come closer. He reached up and hugged Hiccup. "Everything will be fine."

Hiccup gave him a quick hug back, finding some comfort in Grim's velvety voice. "You always know what to say. I guess that comes with being. . . you know."

Grim gave a nod. "Now I think you have a Terror to train. He and Fearcloak have wrestled on the floor long enough."

Hiccup reached down and scooped up the Terror. "Let's find out what you can do."

\* \* \*

><p>The next day the riders went to the Academy.<p>

Grim noticed Meatlug walk in with a bleating sheep in her mouth. He had to smile at the comical sight.

"Oh, Iggy," Fishlegs cooed. "You're the best, most well-trained dragon ever."

Meatlug sought Fishleg's attention.

"No, Meatlug, I can't right now," said Fishlegs.

"\*\*All right,\*\*" Meatlug grumbled. She went to sit in the corner of the arena and put the sheep down beside her.

"Okay," said Fishlegs. "Time to show off what we've trained our Terrible Terrors to do. Why don't you go first, Snotlout?"

"Why don't you go first?" Snotlout countered.

"Fine," said Fishlegs. "I'll go first."

"Oh, no, you don't," said Snotlout. "I'll go first."

"First, second, third, doesn't matter," said Fishlegs. "Because in the end, you're gonna come in last."

"Whoa," said Astrid. "What got into Fishlegs?"

Tuffnut smiled. "Looks like he finally grew some â€"."

"Whoa, how about I go first," Hiccup cut in, parting Snotlout and Fishlegs. "Especially since I don't care whether I win or not because this isn't about winning or losing. Grim, some help."

Grim gathered up the three carved ducks Stoick made and lined them up on Toothless' wing. Once he had done that, he went to sit over with Meatlug.

"\*\*I heard you and Fishlegs are having trouble,\*\*" Grim said as he observed Sharpshot, Hiccup's Terror, expertly shoot the three ducks.

"\*\*He loves that Terror more than me,\*\*" Meatlug said. "\*\*He didn't even play toss the sheep with me. Would you play with me, Grim?\*\*"

"\*\*Sorry, Meatlug,\*\*" said Grim. "\*\*I will not be doing much lifting for a few days. Thornado got a little too rough yesterday with our wrestling match. It's why I was not part of the rescue training session.\*\*"

"\*\*Impressive!\*\*" Deathshriek said, bringing their attention back to the Terrors' skills. Astrid's Terror was displaying its stealth

skills.

"\*\*Most impressive,\*\*" said Grim. "\*\*Fearcloak will have a friend to play with when he goes off to scare unsuspecting Vikings.\*\*"

The twins' Terrors, Head and Butt, rammed their heads together in midflight.

"\*\*Like trainers, like dragons,\*\*" Deathshriek commented.

Fishlegs cleared his throat. "Prepared to be amazed at the smartest little dragon in the archipelago." He motioned to the orange and red Terror on perched on the barrel.

Fishlegs pointed to the several crates that had different objects sitting on top. He then mixed up several drawings and showed one with an apple to his Terror. "Iggy, bring me this."

The Terror looked at the picture before flying over and fetching the apple for Fishlegs.

"Good boy, Iggy," Fishlegs praised. "Aw, he's a good little guy."

"\*\*What?\*" exclaimed Meatlug. She lay down. "\*\*He's going to replace me with Iggy.\*\*"

"\*\*He will do no such thing,\*\*" said Deathshriek. "\*\*You and Fishlegs have a strong bond.\*\*"

"\*\*And if he tries to, I will talk some sense into him,\*\*" said Grim. "\*\*And if that does not work, I will knock some sense into him.\*\*"

"\*\*Don't hurt Fishlegs,\*\*" said Meatlug.

"\*\*It won't come to that,\*\*" said Deathshriek. "\*\*But I'll gladly sit on him while Grim gives him a lecture about neglecting a friend to get even with Snotlout.\*\*"

Grim smirked as Iggy brought Snotlout the bucket he demanded and it landed on top of his head. "\*\*Especially when there are different ways to get even with Snotlout than straight forward confrontation.\*\*"

"Big deal!" Snotlout yelled, throwing the bucket away. "So he plays fetch."

"Well, what does your Terrible Terror do?" Fishlegs asked.

Snotlout opened a crate and the purple terror flew out and attached himself to Snotlout's leg and obtained the stiffness of rigor mortis.

"\*\*And especially when you find someone who likes Snotlout less than you do,\*\*" Grim finished, trying not to laugh.

Fishlegs laughed. "So let me get this straight. You trained him to bite you?"

"Try and pry him loose," Snotlout groaned. "I dare you. It took Gobber all day to get him off this leg." He motioned his Terror-free leg.

"You're ridiculous," said Fishlegs. He turned to Hiccup. "Just tell him I won, Hiccup."

"You won?" asked Snotlout. "Ha! Get real."

"It wasn't even close," said Fishlegs.

"\*\*Oh, boy,\*\*" said Grim, seeing a fight brewing. He started over to them with Deathshriek at his side for support. Neither of them noticed Meatlug suddenly jump up and start sniffing around.

"Whoa, whoa, whoa!" Astrid cut in. "My Terror's stealthiness is awesome, too."

"Astrid, please," Fishlegs said haughtily. "There's no brains in teaching a Terror to hide."

Deathshriek growled at that remark. It took more brains than Fishlegs thought, especially when hunting.

"Hey, our Terrors ram their heads together at high speed," said Ruffnut. "That takes brains."

"Yeah, really hard, rock-like brains," said Tuffnut, hitting his helmet.

Fishlegs and Snotlout began arguing what qualifies as a skill.

Deathshriek shook his head and turned to see Meatlug by the entrance to the Academy with Toothless. She walked passed him and outside, her nose to the ground.

"\*\*Do you know what she smells?\*\*" Deathshriek asked Toothless.

"\*\*No, but she's intent on finding the source,\*\*" replied Toothless. "\*\*She only does this when she smells her favorite rocks.\*\*"

They watched her wander around the outside of the Academy.

Grim and Hiccup were trying to keep a brawl from erupting in the arena. A distant roar caught their attention. Everyone stopped yelling and listened.

"Meatlug?" Fishlegs said, recognizing his dragon's roar. He looked around and saw she was gone. "Meatlug!"

"Outcasts!" Grim yelled.

Fishlegs, Hiccup, Toothless, Grim, and Deathshriek ran from the arena. They found Alvin and Savage with a muzzled Meatlug and pushing her to a hole in the ground. Toothless fired several shots and they disappeared down the hole. One of Toothless' shots caused the rocks at the edge of the hole to seal it.

"Hiccup, they took my Meatlug," Fishlegs cried.

A few moments later, the rest of the riders and their dragons showed up and started blasting the pile of rocks to move them from the hole.

"We're only making things worse," said Fishlegs.

"He's right," said Hiccup. "Hold your fire!"

Everyone stopped firing.

"What are we gonna do, Hiccup?" asked Fishlegs. "Those tunnels go all over the island. He can be going anywhere."

"They don't really go all over the island," said Tuffnut. "Like six yak farms."

"A couple of sheep pens," Ruffnut chimed in.

"Mildew's cabbage field," Tuffnut said.

The twins turned to each other. "Gobber's outhouse." They made sounds of disgust.

The other riders stared at them.

"What?" said Tuffnut. "We spent a lot time in those tunnels. It's a tunnel of fun." He chuckled.

Hiccup took charge. "Okay, we'll have to split up and cover all those places." He started to walk away.

"Great," said Tuffnut. "Dibs on the beach!"

Hiccup froze before turning around with an angry grunt. "Uh, what beach?" he asked Tuffnut.

"The tunnel that goes to the secluded beach on the far side of the island," replied Tuffnut. "I can't believe you haven't been there. There's white sand. So soft on your little toes."

"Okay," Hiccup muttered.

"That is probably where they are headed," said Grim. "We can stop them there provided Grindheart does not find them first and tear them apart."

They got on their dragons, Fishlegs riding with Hiccup, and flew off to the secluded beach, the Terrors in tow.

"If we hear a Whispering Death, then we know Grindheart found them," said Astrid said.

"Less work for us," said Snotlout.

"Oh, if anything happens to my Meatlug, I'll never forgive myself," said Fishlegs.

"It's not your fault, Fishlegs," said Astrid.

"Sure it is," said Tuffnut.

"Tuffnut!" scolded Astrid.

"What?" Tuffnut called back. "It's not my fault. Is it your fault?"

"Nope, not my fault," said Ruffnut.

"Yeah, definitely Fishlegs' fault," Tuffnut said. "Sorry."

Fishlegs' expression fell.

"Guys, not helping," said Hiccup.

"No, no, they're right, Hiccup," said Fishlegs. "I ignored the most important thing in my life because I got so caught up in beating Snotlout."

"See?" Snotlout said. "Bad things happen when you try to beat the Snotman."

The twins gave Snotlout a disgusted look.

"What?" Snotlout asked. "Sometimes the truth is hard to swallow."

"You tried to tell me, Hiccup," Fishlegs continued. "But I didn't listen."

"Fishlegs, we will get her back," said Hiccup. "I promise."

"Hey!" Tuffnut called to them. "If you two girls are done doing each other's hair, there's an Outcast ship we might want to attack."

The riders swooped down. Hookfang shot at the ship with a jet of fire. Barf and Belch came around and Barf fired his gas while Belch ignited it.

"Like shooting yaks in a barrel," said Tuffnut.

Ruffnut laughed. "That was fun."

Stormfly fired several spines, causing the Outcasts on deck to scatter.

Toothless and Deathshriek came around to attack.

"Back off!" they heard Alvin yell. He was holding a sword to Meatlug. "Or I'll run the Gronkle through."

"Hiccup, wait!" cried Fishlegs. "Don't fire!"

Toothless and Deathshriek quickly avoided firing.

"Riders, hold your fire!" yelled Hiccup. "Fall back!"

Grim turned to Hiccup. "Deathshriek and I can get in there without little problem."

"You say little, I say big," said Hiccup. "I saw your bruise. You shouldn't be fighting if you can avoid it."

Fishlegs looked at Meatlug as they fell back. "No! We can't just leave her there!"

"Don't worry, Fishlegs," said Hiccup. "We're not going to."

They flew out of sight of the Outcasts and waited to strike. Able to get close without being seen, Grim and Deathshriek kept watch as Astrid's Terror perched on Alvin's helmet.

Mildew, who they hadn't noticed earlier, opened his mouth to say something, but Savage knocked him out. He drew his sword. "Alvin," he whispered. "Don't move."

He took a swing at the Terror, but the clever thing flew out of the way at the last second. Grim and Deathshriek had to force themselves to stay quiet as Savage hit Alvin over the head with his sword.

Alvin picked himself off the deck.

Savage hid the sword behind his back. "Now let me explain, Alvin."

"\*\*Explain that,\*\*" Deathshriek hissed. "\*\*Please do.\*\*"

Alvin drew his own sword only to have it taken from his hand by Iggy. Iggy gave it to a waiting Fishlegs, who cheered.

"I wish I was as smart as that dragon," Tuffnut said.

"I wish you were as smart as that dragon, too," said Ruffnut.

"Now it's up to Sharpshot," said Hiccup. He gave a hand signal to the Terror.

Sharpshot went into a steep dive and fired at Meatlug's bonds. She tried to take off, but one rope was still hanging on.

"Oh, no, you don't!" Mildew yelled, running to stop her.

Head and Butt slammed into either side of Mildew's head, rendering him unconscious.

The twins laughed.

Deathshriek and Grim became visible and Deathshriek carefully shot off the remaining rope before making a sharp turn to escape.

Meatlug followed, but something grabbed her by the tail.

"Not so fast," said Alvin, holding a rope. He and Savage tried to pull Meatlug back down.

"Oh, no, she's not gonna make it," wailed Fishlegs.

"Oh, yes, she is!" Snotlout yelled, coming around. His Terror was

clamped on his head. He grabbed it and pulled it off. Snotlout stood up and balanced himself on Hookfang's head and threw the Terror like a spear. The Terror cut the rope.

The Outcasts fell back and Meatlug was free.

"Bam!" Snotlout celebrated. "Who's the best dragon trainer now?"

The Terror flew back up and clamped onto Snotlout again, knocking back into the saddle.

Meatlug flew up to Fishlegs.

"Oh, I missed you, too," Fishlegs said as she licked him. He jumped onto her back.

"Just one more loose end to tie up," said Hiccup. He motioned for Sharpshot to stay.

Toothless swooped down and flew across the surface of the water, coming up to the broadside of the Outcasts' ship.

"Wait for it," Hiccup said. "Wait for it. Now, Toothless! Barrel roll! Multiple blast!"

Toothless spun in the air and fired several shots into the side of the Outcast ship. The ship sunk. Toothless and Hiccup returned to the group.

"Oh, baby, we got you back!" Fishlegs said to Meatlug. "Oh, Meatlug!"

"We all did," said Hiccup. "Together."

"Guess that competition was worth something," said Tuffnut.

"Oh, for the last time it wasn't a competition!" Hiccup yelled.

\* \* \*

><p>Back at the Academy, Meatlug and Fishlegs were playing toss the sheep.<p>

"Great toss, girl!" Fishlegs praised.

Toothless flew around and hovered.

"Hey, Fishlegs," said Hiccup. "We're going to do more training with the Terrors."

"No can do, Hiccup," said Fishlegs. "Meatlug and I have a lot of catching up to do."

Toothless flew away, but not alone. Deathshriek and Grim caught up with them.

"He learned his lesson," said Grim.

"Yeah," said Hiccup. "There is something I've been meaning to ask."



"What's that?" asked Grim.

"Those Terrors," said Hiccup. "Why did you put that purple one in there? That one was really aggressive."

"Normally he wouldn't have been," said Grim. "But I thought Snotlout could use a little humbling."

"Yeah, that didn't happen," said Hiccup.

"No, but it was very entertaining," Grim said with a smirk.

Hiccup narrowed his eyes. "You told that Terror to bite Snotlout."

Grim's smirk only widened.

"Now who's terrible?" Hiccup said with a smirk of his own.

\* \* \*

><p><strong>Grim can have a bit of a mean streak when he's annoyed. I'm surprised only the twins have messed with Snotlout in the past, but he is so simple, he's an easy target.<strong>

## 9. Chapter 9

\*\*If you know your Defenders of Berk episodes, you know who's making their return in this chapter.\*\*

\* \* \*

><p>Hiccup, Astrid, and Grim were tagging dragons with paint bombs on Sorrow Island. Astrid tagged two more Nadders and then a third and then a fourth.<p>

"Feel free to join in any time," she called to the brothers.

Astrid and Stormfly went after a fifth and it swerved out of the way of her shot.

"Okay." Hiccup saw her miss and urged Toothless after it. Toothless buzzed over Astrid's head. "How about now?"

Toothless let out a roar. The duo swerved around several sea stacks before getting in front of the Nadder they were trying to tag. Hiccup opened his shield up and used the crossbow feature as a slingshot. His paint bomb hit the Nadder in the chest.

"All right," said Astrid. "I have to admit, the shield is pretty cool."

"Why thank you," said Hiccup. "I quite like it, too."

An unmarked Nadder flew by, but was quickly tagged. They looked behind them and saw Grim and Deathshriek. Grim wrapped his sling around his wrist.

"Nice shot, Grim," said Astrid. "You'd do great with a bola."

Grim gave a nod. "Thank you, Astrid."

"I'm going to check on the twins," said Hiccup. "They're supposed to be marking the Crescent Island dragons."

"I'm sure that's going really well," said Astrid sarcastically.

Grim and Astrid followed Hiccup.

They found Barf and Belch on Crescent Island before they found the twins. The twins were found seconds later in the middle of a paint bomb war with purple paint.

"Guys!" yelled Hiccup to break it up. He ducked out of the way to avoid the two purple paint bombs the twins threw at him. "You're supposed to be tagging the dragons, not each other."

Toothless came out from behind the rock and stood behind Hiccup.

"You know if you think it through, Hiccup," said Tuffnut, "this is pretty much your fault."

Hiccup crossed his arms. "How do you figure that?"

"Uh, hello!" said Ruffnut. "You armed us with paint. Where did you think that was gonna go? And we're the stupid ones."

"How many of these do we have to do anyway?" asked Tuffnut.

"As many as we can," said Hiccup. "The more dragons we tag on each island the better we can keep track of where they belong and where they may migrate to."

"Wow, that was. . .uh," Ruffnut said.

"Fascinating?" prompted Hiccup.

"What's the opposite of fascinating?" Tuffnut asked.

"Hiccup!" called Astrid. Stormfly landed on a boulder above them. "Isn't it supposed to be one dragon color per island?"

"Yeah. Why?"

"I see two colors down there," Astrid replied, pointing to two Gronkles eating rocks. One was marked purple and the other was marked green. "Have we been using the wrong one?"

"I don't think so," said Hiccup.

They looked at the twins.

"Don't look at us," said Tuffnut. "If we had green paint, you know where it will be."

Grim and Deathshriek landed in the clearing.

"There are several dragons marked with green paint," Grim told them.

"I better ask Fishlegs," said Hiccup. "This was his idea."

"You're going to fly all the way back to Berk?" asked Astrid.

"Nope. I don't have to." Hiccup took a sheet of paper and a pencil from his saddle bag and wrote a quick note.

"What's he talking about?" asked Ruffnut.

"He must have some of that magic paper we've been looking for," said Tuffnut.

"He always gets the good stuff," Ruffnut grumbled.

"It's not magic paper," said Hiccup. "Fishlegs, Grim, and I have been working on something new." He took a Terror from his saddle bag. "We call it air mail."

"Stupid name," said Tuffnut.

Ruffnut laughed. "Right?"

Hiccup held the Terror on one arm and tied the paper to the Terror with a string.

"Do you really think that Terrible Terror is going to fly straight to Berk?" asked Astrid.

"Yep, and right to the Academy," said Hiccup.

"Terrors are very territorial dragons," Grim explained. "It is their natural instinct to return to their home from wherever they are. It is as if they have a compass pointing their way home."

Hiccup let the Terror go. It flew over to the twins and nipped at them before flying back to Berk.

"And how will we know that he made it?" asked Astrid.

"When Fishlegs and Snotlout meet us at Dragon Island," Hiccup answered.

Astrid laughed. "If that happens, I'll kiss Snotlout on the lips."

Grim's lips curled up in a smile. "Astrid, you will wish you had not said those words. Or at least not applied them to Snotlout."

\* \* \*

><p>The three of them arrived at Dragon Island and found Snotlout and Fishlegs waiting for them.<p>

"Well, look who it is," said Hiccup. "Fishlegs and Snotlout, both right here on Dragon Island."

Snotlout, who had been sleeping, woke up with a choked

snort.

"Astrid was just talking about you," said Hiccup.

Snotlout chuckled. "Of course she was," he said smugly.

Hiccup and Astrid looked at each other. Hiccup made a kissy face. Astrid jumped down from Stormfly and Hiccup and Grim dismounted.

"Say it and those will be the last words you'll ever speak," Astrid threatened Hiccup, cracking her neck.

Grim gave her a sympathetic look. "I tried to warn you, Astrid."

Astrid glared at him, but found she could not stay angry at the apologetic expression Grim offered her.

"Hiccup, I got your message," said Fishlegs, scratching the Terror Hiccup sent under the chin. "I knew air mail would work. So, uh, what's the emergency?"

"We've been seeing dragons painted green on Crescent Island," Hiccup replied.

"That's your emergency?" Snotlout asked. "I was in the middle of something very important."

"You were sound asleep," said Fishlegs.

"Beauty rest," Snotlout corrected. "You think this just happens?"

The other riders look at him blankly. Snotlout smiled and gestured to himself. They stared for another moment before Hiccup broke the silence.

"Fishlegs, does it make any sense to you why those dragons would be there?"

"No, they shouldn't be." Fishlegs walked over to where he had a map of the archipelago. "Crescent Island is clearly marked as purple."

"That's what I thought," said Hiccup.

"So what were the green dragons doing there?" asked Astrid.

"First of all, it's not green, it's pistachio," Fishlegs started. "They belong on Tall Tree Island. That's where I tagged them." He pointed to the green island on the map.

"Yeah, well, your pistachio dragons aren't where they're supposed to be," Astrid said, moving his hand to Crescent Island.

"Huh. That's weird," Fishlegs said.

"We need to figure this out," Hiccup said. "Let's check out Tall Tree Island."

Snotlout leaned against the rock. "Sounds awesome. I was wondering what I was going to do with the rest of my day."

They took off but didn't get far before Hookfang turned around and they heard Snotlout yell, "See you back on Berk, suckers!"

The four remaining riders flew across the ocean, passing several islands on their way to their destination.

"I don't understand," said Hiccup. "We should be there by now."

"Maybe we're off course," said Astrid.

"I don't do off course, Astrid," said Fishlegs. He took out his map. "It should be right. . ." He trailed off when he saw nothing but water.

"You were saying?" Astrid said.

"Even if we were off course, we would not be off so far that we would not be able to see it," said Grim.

"Well, an island can't just disappear," said Astrid.

"Earthquake maybe," suggested Fishlegs.

"Volcano," Hiccup bounced back.

"Wrath of Thor, wrath of Odin," Fishlegs added.

Hiccup, Grim, and Astrid stared at Fishlegs.

"What?" Fishlegs asked. "Just throwing out possible explanations."

Astrid turned to look ahead. "None of that explains this!" She pointed.

The others looked ahead.

Three Nightmares marked with orange paint flew at them. They flew over them.

"Orange?" exclaimed Astrid.

"Burnt apricot actually," Fishlegs corrected.

"What island are they from?" Astrid asked, ignoring the correction.

Hiccup took a paper from his pocket. "According to this they're from Sun Stone Island."

"Ah, Sun Stone Island," Fishlegs sighed. "Pristine beaches, a veritable smorgasbord of fine mineral deposits for Meatlug."

"\*\*Fishlegs, you're making me hungry,\*\*" said Meatlug.

"Sun Stone Island it is," said Hiccup.

\* \* \*

><p>It was not long before they landed on Sun Stone Island.<p>

"Huh," said Fishlegs. "I thought it was bigger."

The island was nothing more than a boulder sticking out of the sea with a lone pine tree. Meatlug was sitting on the top while the rest of the dragons hung off the side.

"You think?" Astrid quipped.

"I have to say the beaches are a bit of a disappointment," Hiccup added.

"One island is missing and one island is sunk," Fishlegs said.

"I guess an entire island can disappear," said Astrid.

"Well, if the islands are gone, where do the dragons go?" Fishlegs asked.

"Dragons live in specific places for specific reasons," said Grim. "Their food sources, their nesting grounds. The loss of their home can be a loss of life. If they cannot find what they need, they cannot survive."

"We need to figure out what's going on," said Hiccup. "Now. Let's head back to Dragon Island."

Toothless warbled in agreement, mostly because it was becoming extremely uncomfortable holding onto the side of a boulder.

"If it's still there," Astrid added.

The four of them started back to Dragon Island, oblivious to the large shadow that flew over what was left of Sun Stone Island, following them.

\* \* \*

><p>Back at Dragon Island, dragons marked with different color paint filled the sky.<p>

"Look at them all," said Hiccup.

"Check their colors," Astrid told Fishlegs.

Fishlegs began pointing out colors. "I see pistachio, burnt apricot."

"Look!" Astrid said, pointing to the sky. "A new color: Red."

"Technically, that's vermillion," Fishlegs corrected.

Astrid scoffed.

"What? It is!" Fishlegs said.

Hiccup brought the map over to them. "Dragons from three different islands suddenly all here." He took a pencil out of his vest and started marking off the islands. "Look, this forms a line which means there are more islands in danger. Boar Head Island, Thor Rock Island. Toothless, we're going back out."

"You will not go alone," said Grim, following Hiccup to their dragons. "This could get dangerous."

"What makes you say that?" Hiccup asked.

Grim raised an eyebrow. "Islands disappearing mysteriously? Dragons fleeing in terror? You are not concerned about your own safety?" He looked at the circling dragons. "I do not understand what the dragons are saying, but they are fearful."

"Fine," said Hiccup. "Fishlegs, Astrid, you stay here in case any more dragons show up."

"Got it," said Fishlegs. "New dragons. We're on the case."

"Be careful, you two," said Astrid.

"I will watch over him, Astrid," Grim promised.

Hiccup and Grim flew off to Boar Head Island.

\* \* \*

><p>"Boar Head should be down there," Hiccup said.<p>

His brother and their dragons looked down to see nothing but water.

"It's gone, too," said Hiccup.

"We should move on to Thor Rock," said Grim.

They flew on. What they came across was the cliffs sticking out of the ocean like hands reaching to be saved.

Grim let out a soft gasp. "This is what is left of Thor Rock?"

"Let's get a closer look, bud," Hiccup told Toothless.

The hovered of what was not sea-level of Thor Rock. There was a large hole in the ground.

"These markings seem familiar, but different," said Hiccup.

"Very familiar," Grim added. "Only larger. Hiccup, we need to leave now."

They heard a roar and the cliffs of Thor Rock began collapsing. A massive, long white dragon sprang up from the ground and looked down

at them with blood red eyes.

"The Screaming Death!" yelled Hiccup.

Grim shouted something that Hiccup could not understand, but he knew it wasn't Dragonese.

"Someone has been eating their vegetables," Hiccup said.

"And everything else it can find," Grim added.

The Screaming Death roared and Toothless and Deathshriek struggled in the air. It then dove beneath the surface.

"The Screaming Death has been destroying all the island," said Hiccup. "It must be tunneling underneath and causing them to collapse in on themselves."

"Why would it do that?" Grim asked.

"I don't know," said Hiccup. "Let's get a closer look."

The two dragons flew over a cliff that was then decimated behind them.

"Hiccup!" yelled Grim.

Toothless turned around and they came nose to giant head with the Screaming Death. It was so big now it could swallow Hiccup and Toothless whole.

"Easy bud," Hiccup said. "Maybe it wants to be friends."

The Screaming Death growled low, but loud enough for Grim to understand. "\*\*\*You.\*\*\*"

"Or maybe not," said Hiccup.

Toothless flew away.

The Screaming Death fired at them before following. Toothless flew around the cliffs and sea stacks. The Screaming Death flew through the obstacles without slowing down.

Deathshriek came around and shrieked in the Screaming Death's ear. Grim turned Deathshriek to fly up with Toothless. They both attacked the Screaming Death with plasma blasts and blue fire. The Screaming Death turned and flew away, having enough.

"We need to return to Dragon Island," Grim said.

"Right," said Hiccup.

They turned and started flying back.

"Grim, what did you say back there when you saw the Screaming Death?" Hiccup asked.

Grim's jaw tightened. "Nothing that needs to be repeated."



"What language was that?" Hiccup continued.

Again, Grim did not answer right away. "It has been a long time since I spoke my native tongue."

They flew back to Dragon Island.

"Periwinkle blue!" Fishlegs cried when they landed. "There are now periwinkle blue marked dragons here."

"I know," said Hiccup, getting off of Toothless. "From Boar Head Island."

Fishlegs pointed up in the air. "And eggshell white!"

Grim dismounted Deathshriek. "From Thor Rock Island."

"What happened to them?" asked Astrid.

Hiccup took out the map. "The same thing that happened to all the other islands." He marked off Sorrow Island. "Screaming Death."

Fishlegs gasped. "The Screaming Death is back?"

"It never truly left," Grim said. "It only grew in size and attitude."

"Uh, how much bigger?" whimpered Fishlegs.

"It is eating islands," Grim stated plainly.

"That's just as I thought," said Hiccup, circling the sunken islands. "It is following an imaginary line, destroying anything in its path."

"It's coming right at us," said Fishlegs.

"That's not even the worse part." Hiccup drew a line from Dragon Island to Berk.

"It's heading straight to Berk," said Astrid in horror.

"We have to get back to Berk and warn Stoick," said Fishlegs.

"No," said Hiccup, walking out to a small cliff. "We head it off. We make our stand here. There's no other land between here and Berk."

"Look, I'm all about danger, but if this thing is as big as you say, we can't take it by ourselves," Astrid said.

Hiccup came back from the cliff to Toothless. "It's not going to be just us. We're sending for reinforcements." He took a piece of paper from Toothless' bag.

"Snotlout and the twins?" scoffed Astrid. "Oh, I feel so much better."

Hiccup tied the note to the Terror they had left with Fishlegs. "Hey.

We're gonna need all the help we can get."

"Even in the form of Snotlout and the twins," Grim added.

Hiccup sent the Terror on its way.

\* \* \*

><p>They waited and kept a lookout for the twins and Snotlout. An hour later they saw dragons marked with yellow paint.<p>

"The yellow marked dragons from Sorrow Island just started showing up," Fishlegs informed Hiccup.

"Which means the Screaming Death is only one island away," Astrid said, pointing to Last Island.

Grim couldn't help but think about how fitting the name was at that moment.

"Looks like help's not coming," said Hiccup. "All right. We'll have to set up a defense here on Dragon Island with what we have."

"Maybe we should fall back and head for home," Astrid suggested.

"We can't," said Hiccup. "If the Screaming Death destroys Dragon Island, these dragons will overwhelm Berk."

"And the Screaming Death won't be far behind," Fishlegs said.

"Exactly," said Hiccup.

"How soon 'til it gets here?" Astrid asked.

A loud roar could be heard off in the distance. The riders turned in its direction.

Hiccup grabbed his shield and ran over to Toothless. "Toothless and I will try to buy us some time. You guys join me up there when Snotlout and the twins get here."

"I'm going with you," said Astrid.

"No, I need you here as a safety net in case it gets passed me," said Hiccup.

"So you're leaving me here by myself?" Astrid asked.

"Uh, hello!" said Fishlegs. "Men on dragons here, right behind you."

Astrid turned to Fishlegs and Grim. "You know what I meant, Fishlegs."

Fishlegs crossed his arms. "I do. And I would like to go on record saying we don't appreciate it. Do we, girl?"

"\*\*We do not!\*\*" Meatlug added.

"And just because I cannot reason with the Screaming Death does not make me useless," Grim added with some bite in his voice.

Astrid gave up. "Ugh, just go."

Toothless took to the sky.

Grim did not like waiting. He wanted to be up there with Hiccup fighting the Screaming Death. But he understood why. Hiccup needed to focus on the Screaming Death and not have to worry about anyone else getting hurt.

Astrid used Hiccup's spyglass to search for the remaining riders. "I knew we couldn't rely on that Terrible Terror air mail," she said, jumping off the rock she was standing on.

"Actually, we can," said Fishlegs. "Like all dragons, Terrible Terrors are â€".

"Territorial, I know!" Astrid finished.

Grim and Fishlegs stiffened.

"Wait," Fishlegs said. "That's it. Astrid, you're a genius. I could kiss you on the lips right now."

Astrid shoved him away. "No one is kissing me on the lips, ever!"

The Screaming Death's roar caught their attention. Despite Hiccup and Toothless' efforts, it was coming closer to Dragon Island.

"Cover for Hiccup," Grim told Astrid. "I have an idea, but we need as much time as you can give us. Fishlegs, with me. I cannot believe I did not think of this earlier."

Grim ran off with Fishlegs following him.

"Wait!" cried Astrid. "Where are you going?"

"Trust us, Astrid," Grim said without turning.

Fishlegs and Grim found a bunch of the displaced Gronkles.

"Okay, we found them," said Fishlegs. "How do we get them to follow us?"

Grim stepped up to the Gronkles. He let out a Gronkle roar to get their attention. The Gronkles turned to the two riders.

"\*\*Gronkles displaced by the Screaming Death, home-robber, island-eater!\*\*" Grim began. "\*\*At this moment, two brave dragons are fighting to protect and defend your home from this beast. They cannot do it alone. They need your help. Fight with us. Fight for your territory! Fight for your homes! Do not let this beast take everything from you!\*\*"

The Gronkles began roaring and started to take off.

Grim turned to Fishlegs.

"What did you say to them?" Fishlegs asked.

"Fishlegs, lead those Gronkles," said Grim. "I will see if I can find more dragons to help us."

Fishlegs nodded. "Everyone, follow me!" he called to the Gronkles.

Fishlegs found Meatlug and led the Gronkles into battle. He passed Hiccup as they approached the Screaming Death.

"Fishlegs!" Hiccup yelled. "What are you doing? You need backup!"

"Oh, I've got backup!" Fishlegs shouted back. The wild Gronkles caught up with Fishlegs. "Meatlug, spew!"

Meatlug fired a blast and the other Gronkles followed her lead.

The Screaming Death was bombarded with Gronkle fire. The fire let up and Gronkles began slamming into the Screaming Death's head with as much force as possible.

"Man, it's like Gronkle fest out here!" Astrid said. "How'd he do that?"

"Gronkles are territorial, too," said Hiccup. "They will defend their home at any cost. Great idea, Fishlegs!"

"I know, right?" Fishlegs said. "Who's the safety net now?"

Having enough of the Gronkles' beating on it, the Screaming Death dove underground.

"Did you see that?" Fishlegs asked, hovering over the snow. "It ran away."

"Uh, not quite," said Hiccup.

The ground began shaking.

Hiccup understood what was happening. "Astrid, Fishlegs, get as many wild dragons together as you can. I'm going to try to force it back to the surface."

Astrid and Fishlegs turned away and flew off to find more wild dragons. They met up with Grim, who was rallying wild dragons.

"It's trying to sink the island!" Grim yelled up to them. "Where's Hiccup?"

"Trying to force it above ground," Astrid answered.

"These dragons are ready to fight," said Grim.

More Gronkles and Nadders were added to the dragons they had.

Grim got on Deathshriek and they went to help Hiccup. They found that the twins and Snotlout had arrived and Hiccup had successfully gotten

the Screaming Death above ground.

"All right, dragons!" Astrid yelled. "Let's get territorial!"

The Screaming Death found it under attack by angry Gronkles and Nadders. The sky was filled with fireballs and spines and the majority of them were hitting the Screaming Death. The other riders added their attacks, including Deathshriek shrieking as loudly as he possibly could in its ear.

"It's working!" Hiccup yelled. "All the wild dragons are defending their homes."

The Screaming Death had enough and flew away, a Nadder chasing it and firing a jet of flames at its retreating form.

"I don't think the Screaming Death is gonna mess with Dragon Island anymore," Astrid said.

Rock cracked and the island began to sink.

"Oh, man, but it is still sinking!" Hiccup said.

Water began to come up from the tunnel the Screaming Death made.

Fishlegs suddenly had an idea. "Lava blast!"

They watched as Meatlug and the other Gronkles began using lava blasts to stop up the water.

The island stopped sinking.

"The lava is stabilizing the island," said Hiccup. "Fishlegs, Meatlug, you two are the heroes today."

"Oh, come on, you're making us blush," said Fishlegs. He gave Meatlug a hug and Meatlug licked Fishlegs.

\* \* \*

><p>Back on Berk, the riders walked out to the cliff overlooking the ocean just outside of the Academy.<p>

"Everybody saw how that Screaming Death turned tail and ran as soon as Hookfang and I showed up. Right?"

"Uh-huh," Astrid said. "And all those wild dragons had nothing to do with it."

"Correct!" said Snotlout.

"As long as we never have to see the Screaming Death again," said Fishlegs. "It's giving Meatlug gas. And I don't have to tell you what that's like."

Astrid walked over to where Hiccup and Grim were standing at the edge of the cliff. Hiccup was holding a paper in his hands. "Hey, did you find anything else about the Screaming Death."

"The good news is they only hatch one every hundred years or so," Hiccup said.

"That's the good news?" Astrid asked.

Snotlout punched Fishlegs in the arm. "What's the bad news?"

"Let me guess," laughed Tuffnut. "What's it gonna be? The end of the world?"

"Close," said Hiccup.

Tuffnut's smile disappeared. "I was kidding."

Hiccup turned back to the water. "The bad news is it's still out there and some day it will come back to Berk."

\* \* \*

><p><strong>If you want to know what Grim said, just think of a four letter word that could get you into trouble. The Screaming Death doesn't talk much. You have to remember, even though it's huge, it's still a baby.<strong>

## 10. Chapter 10

**\*\*Two chapters in one day because they are so short. I'll probably update again on Tuesday. Challenge is still open to all takers. This time I have a hint that hopefully won't be too easy. The answer will be revealed in four chapters, since the next chapter I'm posting is going to cover both episodes of A View of the Skrill.\*\***

**\*\*CHALLENGE: After this installment of the Dragon Trainer, Dragon Speaker series ends, I am doing another installment that will be a crossover. What story do you think I'll be crossing HTTYD with? \*\***

**\*\*HINT: It is a book series that was turned into an anime involving three people on a quest to save their kingdom from evil. The book series (I am a purist and will be using only the book series in the crossover) involves magic, monsters, and in later books, dragons. The author's initials are E.R.\*\***

**\*\*Previous answers (posted before hint): \*\***

**\*\*Eragon\*\***

**\*\*Harry Potter\*\***

**\*\*Danny Phantom\*\***

**\*\*Code: LYOKO\*\***

\* \* \*

><p>He didn't know how Hiccup and the others did this. The dragons once said that Grim had the patience of a rock when it came to learning Dragonese, but apparently the well was beginning to run dry. They were supposed to learning how to disarm the dragon traps that

were still set up around the island. However, the twins were making it impossible for Grim to concentrate while he watched their dangerous antics around the traps and worrying he was about to attend two funerals.<p>

Grim could have sobbed with relief when Gobber told him he needed to see Stoick about something. He got on Deathshriek and they made a beeline to where Stoick was. Many of the Vikings were at the docks hauling buckets and barrels of water up to the village. Grim spotted Stoick directing them.

"Stoick," Grim called. He jumped off Deathshriek. "You needed to see me."

"Yes, Grim, I need your help," said Stoick. "I need to know when the next storm is coming through."

"Stoick, I can only predict the weather, not control it," Grim said.

"I know that." Stoick turned and shouted to the Vikings to keep working. "But we need to know."

Grim let out a sigh. He had been keeping track of the wind patterns for the last month. It hadn't rained in two months and the ground and vegetation were dry. It would not take much for a fire to start.

"I do not know when, Stoick," said Grim. "It will not be soon."

Stoick let out a heavy sigh of his own. "Well, we better be ready when a fire breaks out. Everything is perfect for fire weather."

"How can you tell?" Grim asked.

"Feel this." Gobber came up behind him grabbed his hand and brought it to his chin. "Usually it's supple, tender, like a newborn baby. When it's fire weather, dry as a fifty year old yak."

Grim let go of Gobber's chin, hiding the fact about how awkward he felt. He began to help the other Vikings carry water from the sea up to the village.

"Don't you want to help the others disarm the dragon traps?" Gobber asked.

"I have had enough of the twins for one day," said Grim. "And I am not familiar enough with the traps to safely disarm them. I missed several of Hiccup's instructions because of the twins."

He helped out for hours until he saw a black dragon fly into view. Hiccup and Toothless landed on the docks.

"Dad, I need to talk to you," said Hiccup.

"No time, son. Fire weather."

"But how did you know?" Hiccup asked.

"Gobber, show him," said Stoick.

Gobber proceeded to go over what he and Grim did with Hiccup.

"Which brings us to you," said Stoick.

"It does?" Hiccup asked.

"Yes, you and Grim," said Stoick. "One erred dragon blast could burn Berk to the ground. So make sure the twins don't do anything stupid out there."

The riders and their dragons looked at each other. Making sure the twins didn't do anything stupid was like telling a dragon not fly: it was not going to happen.

Grim helped the other Vikings a little longer. He then came over to find Hiccup and Astrid talking. Hiccup got on Toothless and flew off.

"What is happening?" Grim asked Astrid.

"The twins haven't come back yet," said Astrid. "Hiccup is going out to look for them."

"I will follow," said Grim. "\*\*\*Deathshriek!\*\*\*"

The Baleful Banshee swooped down and Grim jumped onto his back. They quickly caught up with Hiccup.

"Hiccup!" Grim called.

"Grim, what are you doing here?" Hiccup asked.

"I saw you leave and Astrid told me the twins have not returned," Grim answered. "You will need help getting them back to town."

"Why do you say that?" asked Hiccup.

"You can barely control one of them," Grim pointed out.

They scanned the ground below.

"Keep your eyes open," Hiccup said to Grim and the dragons.

Hiccup and Toothless looked up and saw the giant plume of black smoke. Grim and Deathshriek saw it, too.

"Like I said, fire weather," Hiccup said. "Just great. You know what they say, where there's fire, there's the twins."

They got lower so they were skimming the flames, searching for the twins. Grim was not bothered by the fire, but he was worried about Hiccup and Toothless. They were too close for Grim's liking to the fire and it would not take much for Toothless' tailfin to catch fire.

"Toothless, there." Hiccup pointed to some trees that were in danger of burning. "Come in low, bud, to avoid the fire and - the massive Typhoomerang!"



A burning tree fell. Toothless and Deathshriek got out of its way, but the embers caught Toothless' tailfin on fire.

\*\*\*The clearing!\*\*\* Grim yelled to them. \*\*\*Get to the clearing!\*\*\*

Toothless just barely made it. They crash landed and Hiccup was sent tumbling.

"Hiccup!" Tuffnut yelled.

Deathshriek landed and Grim jumped off. There were the twins, Tuffnut stuck in a netter trap, and a red and orange Typhoomerang.

Hiccup got to his feet.

The Typhoomerang roared and spread his wings.

"Okay, everyone, stand back," said Hiccup. "This is bad."

The Typhoomerang approached Hiccup.

Grim ran to get between the dragon and his brother. \*\*\*Back off!\*\*\* he roared. \*\*\*You will not harm my brother without going through me first.\*\*\*

"Wait a second," said Hiccup. "I know you."

The Typhoomerang came closer. Hiccup grabbed Toothless and Grim retreated. They found themselves cocooned in dragon wings.

The Typhoomerang opened its wings first before Toothless released Hiccup and Grim. Hiccup stepped away and looked up at the Typhoomerang. They stared for a moment.

\*\*\*Hello, friend,\*\*\* the Typhoomerang greeted. \*\*\*Remember me?\*\*\*

Hiccup put his hand up. The Typhoomerang lowered his head and pushed his nose against Hiccup's palm.

\*\*\*You do remember me,\*\*\* said the Typhoomerang. \*\*\*It is good to see you again.\*\*\*

Hiccup moved to rub its snout. "Th-thi-this isn't just any Typhoomerang! Ruff, Tuff, don't you recognize this guy? Look at him! It's Torch!"

"What?" Ruffnut cried. "No way."

"Hiccup, Torch is like this big," Tuffnut said, holding his hands out in front of him. "Puh! And he calls himself the dragon conqueror."

"No, I don't call myself that," Hiccup said. "And this is Torch. He just grew, a lot! That's what happens when you, well, grow up."

"Uh, nope," said Tuffnut. "I'm drawing a blank here. I don't know anything about that."

"Yeah, got nothing," said Ruffnut.

Torch turned his attention to Grim. "\*\*\*I don't remember you. You are Hiccup's clutch-mate. You don't look like it.\*\*" He sniffed Grim. "\*\*\*Or smell like it. I think I can like you,\*\* too."

Toothless growled and Torch knocked him down with his tail. Toothless got up to retaliate and Torch roared.

Hiccup didn't hesitate to get between them. "Come on, guys, you're not going to start this again. Right now we got a fire bearing down on us. Ruffnut, get Tuffnut out of that trap."

"Yeah, about that," said Ruffnut. "We've been trying."

"But someone, I won't mention any names, didn't give very clear instructions," Tuffnut added.

Grim's patience came to an abrupt end. "The instructions could be clear as glass and you still wouldn't understand them!"

"Oh, never mind," said Hiccup. He ran over to where Barf and Belch were tied up and cut them free. He pointed to Tuffnut. "Belch, help me up."

The Zippleback walked over and Belch helped Hiccup up to the top of the net.

"Just leave me," coughed Tuffnut, both from the smoke and trying to sound dramatic. "Save yourself."

"You heard him," said Ruffnut, starting to run. "Let's get out of here."

"Again! Kidding!" yelled Tuffnut.

Ruffnut stopped. "Yeah, me, too." She gave a nervous laugh.

Hiccup struggled with the release mechanism. He turned and saw the fire quickly approaching. They were going to be surrounded in moments if Hiccup couldn't get Tuffnut down.

Grim saw him struggling. "\*\*\*Barf, help me up.\*\*"

Barf complied and lifted Grim to Hiccup's level.

"It's stuck tight," said Hiccup.

Grim gently pushed Hiccup aside and tried to get it himself. "Jammed."

The brothers jumped down.

"We need to get out of here," said Hiccup. "That fire is headed straight to Berk. Torch, can you give us a lift?"

Torch lowered himself and Hiccup, Toothless, Ruffnut, and Barf and Belch climbed onto his back. Grim got on Deathshriek. They lifted off and Torch took the entire netter trap out of the tree and carried

Tuffnut in his talons.

"The fire is headed for that logging path," said Hiccup over Tuffnut's yelling. "If it jumps over, it will burn through Berk before we can do anything. Okay, Torch, set us down on that path."

Torch turned his head. "\*\*\*You got it.\*\*" He began to descend.

Tuffnut was the closest to the fire and getting closer. "Guys, as awesome as this fire is up close, I think my back hair just went up in flames. And you know how much I love my back hair and how much of it there is."

"It's true, he does," said Ruffnut. "Almost as much as I like mine."

"Just hang on," said Hiccup. "We're going in for a landing!"

Torch dropped Tuffnut into another tree and the dragons landed on the path. The fire had already reached them.

"Aw, it's too late," said Hiccup.

"Wait!" Tuffnut said. "Torch could help. Torch!" Tuffnut waved a finger in the air.

Torch began to spin.

"Torch, no, don't do that!" Hiccup called out. He turned to Tuffnut. "Tuff, we don't need any more fires, especially coming from a Typhoomerang. We need to get water."

"First of all, you don't fight fire with water," said Tuffnut.

"At least we don't," said Ruffnut.

"We fight it with fire," said Tuffnut.

Hiccup and Grim turned to the burning trees with the same idea.

"If we clear these trees ahead of the fire, there won't be anything left for it to burn," said Hiccup. "Ruff, Tuff, that's brilliant!"

"I must agree," said Grim.

"Duh, hello!" Ruffnut said, crossing her arms.

"We knew that," said Tuffnut. "We knew we were brilliant."

"Okay, guys, here's the plan," said Hiccup. "When I give the signal, tell Barf and Belch, and Deathshriek to start blasting. Toothless and me are going to do that same."

"Fight fire with fire!" Ruffnut cheered. "We should make that our catchphrase."

"Yeah," Tuffnut agreed. "That or a yak's gotta do what a yak's gotta

do."

They all stared at him blankly.

"What? It's catchy," defended Tuffnut. "Oh, don't tell me won't be using that."

"Ready!" Hiccup called. "Now!"

They burned all the trees in front of the fire.

"Keep it moving to burn itself out!" Grim shouted.

"Toothless, wind!"

"\*\*Deathshriek, wings!\*\*"

The two smaller dragons hovered and beat their wings in the direction of the fire. The flames turned back.

"Barf, Belch, wings!" Tuffnut ordered. "Do your thing, Torch!"

With the others' help, mostly Torch's, the fire stopped moving.

"Torch, now!" Hiccup made a circle with his arm.

Torch flew into the fire and flew around in tighter circles. The flames were sucked into a vortex and went out. They watched as the skeletons of burnt trees became visible through the smoke.

"Nice going, Torch!" Hiccup said. "You, too, bud."

"And still no love for the trapped Viking," Tuffnut complained.

Torch nuzzled Tuffnut. "\*\*Here you go.\*\*"

"Finally!"

They flew back to Berk. Torch dropped Tuffnut and he hung on the dragon figurehead of a house. Deathshriek and Torch landed and the riders and dragons climbed off Torch's back.

"A Typhoomerang!" Fishlegs cried. "Amazing!"

"Not just any Typhoomerang," said Hiccup. "Take a closer look."

"Is that Torch?" Fishlegs asked.

"No way!" cried Astrid.

"Please tell me he didn't bring the family," whimpered Snotlout.

"I found him in the woods," said Tuffnut. "And I trained him."

"He actually did," said Hiccup. "It was pretty awesome."

"No way," said Snotlout. "Tuffnut couldn't get himself out of that trap."

"Oh, yeah? Watch this." Tuffnut spread his arms. "Hey, Torch, wings!"

Torch spread his wings and knocked Snotlout into a wheelbarrow. The wheelbarrow rolled down the docks and into the ocean.

There was a loud roar across the ocean. Torch turned to it before nudging Tuffnut.

"Ow. Quit it. What's he doing?" asked Tuffnut.

"He is saying goodbye," Grim translated.

"Oh. I'm going to miss you, Torch," Tuffnut said, rubbing his snout. "You're the only one who listened to me."

Torch pulled away.

Tuffnut roared and Torch mimicked him. He beat his wings and flew around the village, creating a tight spiral with sparks trailing him before flying out over the ocean.

"Okay," said Tuffnut. "Can you guys let me out of this trap now?"

"Well, I suppose," said Hiccup.

"Ah-ah-ah!" Gobber said, grabbing Hiccup's shoulder. "Not so fast, Hiccup." He turned to Tuffnut. "You got yourself into that. You need to get yourself out."

The riders took Tuffnut to the Academy where Ruffnut tried to help Tuffnut out of the trap. That's where they left them. They would see if they had gotten out him in the morning.

\* \* \*

><p><strong>I didn't have a lot in mind for this chapter, so I worked with what I came up with. It turned out short, but there was quite a bit going on with the fire and I couldn't add to it without making it seem forced.<strong>

\*\*Also I would like to take this opportunity and give some free press to another author. I don't usually do this, but the stories this person has written I believe are excellent and credit is due where credit is deserved. TheSpaminator92 has written a story for The Hobbit titled A New World, New Life and is currently in the process of post a sequel titled A Changing World, Changing Life. It is probably the only story I will stay up late on a work night just so I can read what happens next. I have always felt that I have high standards when it comes to choosing my favorite stories and these standards have been exceeded. So lovers of The Hobbit fan fiction, if you enjoy Girl in Middle Earth on the Quest for Erebor with AU at some places, seriously consider reading this because it's not about a ditzy girl like some of them are. I am very impressed. TheSpaminator92, I salute you.\*\*

**\*\*Sorry it took me so long to update. I was going to do it Tuesday and I couldn't get on Fan Fiction. So here it is. As for the challenge, the E.R. in my hint is the author's initials and it's not Elephant Run or Erec Rex, but they look interesting. I'll probably announce it sooner than I plan to to give you ample time to become familiar with the series. Review and leave your guesses.\*\***

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**\*\*Previous answers:\*\***

**\*\*Eragon\*\***

**\*\*Harry Potter\*\***

**\*\*Danny Phantom\*\***

**\*\*Code: LYOKO\*\***

**\*\*Elephant Run\*\***

**\*\*Erec Rex\*\***

**\* \* \***

><p>Toothless let out a roar as he, Deathshriek, Stormfly, and Hookfang flew over the northern sea bearing their riders.<p>

"We're getting pretty far north," said Astrid.

"Bucket and Mulch are two days overdue," Hiccup said. "We need to keep searching."

Astrid rubbed her arms. "You don't really think they're up here, do you?"

"You can't take the cold, huh, Astrid?" jabbed Snotlout.

"No," Astrid bit back, "I just don't have a heated seat like you do."

"That's right," Snotlout replied smugly. "You don't." He gave Hookfang a signal.

**\*\*Yeah, yeah,\*\*** growled Hookfang, flaming up lightly.

"Ah, toasty," said Snotlout.

Grim steered Deathshriek closer and above Stormfly. He pulled up his

dragon scale tunic. "Astrid, raise your arms."

"What?" asked Astrid.

"Just do it," Grim told her.

Astrid lifted her arms. She went blind as something was pulled over her head. Her vision cleared in a second as Grim pulled his shirt over her head. "Grim!"

Grim jumped off of Stormfly and back onto Deathshriek.

"Grim, are you insane?" Astrid cried. "You can't be out here without a shirt!"

"Astrid, I have been in the cold without a shirt before," Grim calmly countered. "I am used to the cold. Take my shirt for now."

Astrid hugged herself. The shirt was very warm. "Thanks."

Hiccup looked down. There was an iceberg and two ships, one being a Berkian ship. "Looks like they're in trouble. Come on, bud."

The dragons descended to attack. Stormfly fired her spines at the archers in the attacking ship.

"Nice shooting, Astrid," Hiccup said. "Snotlout, light 'em up!"

Snotlout cheered as Hookfang flew between the ships and blasted the plank away.

Now it was Hiccup and Grim's turn. Toothless fired a plasma blast into the water between the two ships and Deathshriek shrieked and the two dragons forced the attacking ship away.

"Retreat!" the order was called from the attacking ship.

The riders landed.

"What happened here?" Hiccup asked Bucket and Mulch.

"Well, we thought the Berserkers had hit the iceberg and so we came in to help them," said Mulch. "They attacked us because we saw. . . it."

"It?" repeated Hiccup and Astrid.

Mulch and Bucket got off the ship and walked over to where several tools were laying on the ground and spikes in the ice.

"It." Mulch pointed to something in the ice with his hook.

Hiccup and Grim stepped up to the ice.

"That looks like a -." Hiccup wiped at the ice with his sleeve. An eye and teeth were visible.

"Dragon," Grim finished in awe.

"Why would Berserkers be trying to dig it out?" Astrid asked.

Hiccup picked up a small hammer. "No idea. But I'm going to find out."

"Oh, great!" Snotlout grouched. "Now we have to dig it out?"

"Actually, I have a much better idea," said Hiccup.

They turned around to see Toothless rolling in the snow.

Toothless, still on his back, looked at them. "\*\*\*What?\*\*\*"

They blasted and burned the ice around the frozen dragon. With some rope from the ship, they secured the block of ice and the four dragons carried it back to Berk with Bucket and Mulch sailing behind them.

They made it back to the Academy where they showed it to Fishlegs and the twins.

Toothless sniffed at the block of ice. "\*\*\*It smells odd,\*\*" he commented.

"I say we smash it," Snotlout said, pounding his fist into his hand.

The twins climbed up on the ice and Barf and Belch came up behind it.

"I say we blast it," said Tuffnut.

"I say we blast, then smash it," Ruffnut said.

"And blast it again!" the twins finished.

"Stop saying what I'm saying now!" Tuffnut yelled at Ruffnut angrily.

"Yeah, that's certainly one approach," said Hiccup. He walked over to inspect the ice.

Tuffnut laughed and cleared his throat. "Good sir, I believe it is actually three approaches, my fine fellow."

The twins jumped off the ice.

"Let's just get a better look at this thing," said Hiccup. "Fishlegs, give me a slow burn."

"With pleasure. Meatlug." Fishlegs whistled. "Lava blast."

"\*\*\*Okay, I'm coming, dear,\*\*" she said sleepily. She walked over to the block and blasted with a lava blast before turning around to go lie down again.

"Nice, Fishlegs," said Hiccup.

The ice was reduced a third of its original size and giving the



riders a clearer view of the dragon inside.

Hiccup, Fishlegs, and Grim looked at the dragon.

"Is that what I think it is?" Hiccup asked.

"I think so," Fishlegs replied. "But I've only seen pictures."

"Grim?"

"I've only known through stories the dragons told me," Grim said.

"Do you realize how huge this could be, Fishlegs?" Hiccup asked.

"The word 'epic' comes to mind," Fishlegs said.

"I hate it when they get like this," Astrid grumbled, crossing her arms.

"Don't you just?" Snotlout asked, putting his elbow on her shoulder.

Astrid threw off his arm.

Hiccup, Grim, Fishlegs, and Toothless walked away to go back to the village.

"I'm going to check the Book of Dragons just to be sure about this," said Fishlegs.

"Good idea," said Hiccup. "If we're right, this could be big trouble."

"If someone doesn't start filling me in, I'm getting my axe," Astrid said, chasing after them.

Hookfang roared. "\*\*\*Are they serious leaving you three here?\*\*\*"

The twins and Snotlout turned to the dragon in the ice. Tuffnut chuckled and punched his fist into his open hand.

"No one touches that ice while we're gone!" Hiccup called.

"\*\*Good luck with that,\*\*" Hookfang said.

The three troublemakers threw up their hands.

\* \* \*

><p>Astrid walked beside Grim. She had since returned his shirt to him. "What is going on?" she asked him, knowing Grim would probably give her answer.<p>

"The dragon may be a Skrill," said Grim.

"A Skrill?" Astrid repeated. "Are you sure?"

"No," replied Grim. "The other dragons only told me about Skrills. I have never seen one. It is why Fishlegs needs to check the Book of Dragons."

Fishlegs went to check the Book of Dragons and the rest of them went to the great hall.

Hiccup pushed the door open and closed them once the others were inside. The Vikings were discussing what had happened to Mulch and Bucket. "I think I know why Dagur's men attacked Bucket and Mulch."

"Go on, son," Stoick encouraged.

"We got a better look at the dragon Bucket and Mulch found in the ice," said Hiccup.

"We found a dragon?" cried Bucket. He turned to Mulch. "Can we keep it? I always my own dragon, Mulch."

"Uh," Hiccup said nervously, "it's a Skrill."

Whispers went through the crowd of Vikings.

"Oh," Bucket said his excitement now dead. "I don't want one of those."

Mulch elbowed Bucket hard in the side.

"Are you sure about this, son?" Stoick asked.

The door opened and Fishlegs rushed in. "Oh! We are sure!" He threw his arms around Astrid and Hiccup's shoulders. "Ha-ha! Whoo! Oh, yeah, oh, yeah, Fishlegs!" He laughed in excitement.

The other stared at him.

Fishlegs went silent and looked at the eyes staring at him. "Sorry, chief," he laughed nervously. "That happens sometimes when we discover a new dragon. I get a little -."

"Look." Hiccup took the Book of Dragons. "It's right here." He opened the book and showed everyone the drawing. "That is definitely a Skrill."

"And the Skrill is the symbol of the Berserkers," Astrid said.

The riders in the great hall walked out with Gobber and Stoick.

"Legend has it the lightning comes from the Skrill's mouth and thunder from its - well, you know," Gobber told them.

"Remind me never to get behind one," said Astrid.

"That's actually inaccurate," said Fishlegs. "According to the Book of Dragons, the Skrill drew lightning from the clouds and redirected it."

"It could use that lightning to hit several targets at once, which is

why it was such a feared dragon," Hiccup finished.

"It could also store the lightning in its body and use it later," Fishlegs added.

"Then why, may I ask, was the Night Fury titled as the unholy offspring of lightning and death itself?" Grim asked, he looked at Toothless.

Toothless grumbled, "\*\*\*I don't know.\*\*\*"

"I've heard enough," said Stoick. "We need to get rid of that Skrill. It's just the excuse Dagur needs to go to war."

"You all know I love good fight as much as the next person," said Gobber. "But why not just give it to them? It's just a frozen dragon carcass after all."

"Actually, because of their internal body temperature, Skrills can safely stay frozen for decades," said Fishlegs.

\* \* \*

><p>They walked towards the Academy.<p>

"So let me get this straight," said Stoick. "This dragon may still be alive and you left Ruffnut, Tuffnut, and Snotlout to guard it?"

"We did not realize it was possible it was still alive," said Grim.

"Okay, that sounds much worse when you say it," said Hiccup. "But it's frozen solid in a block of ice. How much damage could it possibly do?"

There was an explosion from the Academy. Toothless was off like a shot for the Academy, Grim not far behind and running faster than anyone thought was humanly possible. He entered the Academy thirty seconds after Toothless did, in time to see the two legged, black and purple dragon try to break through the metal cage that was the ceiling of the Academy, lightning dancing all around.

"\*\*Get away!\*\*" the Skrill roared.

Toothless, Meatlug, and Hookfang blocked its path.

"\*\*Calm down,\*\*" Grim tried to soothe the Skrill.

It looked at Grim for a second before seeing the open door. It ran for it. Stormfly tried to stop it by getting between the dragon and the way out. The Skrill bowled Stormfly over like she was nothing. Once outside it flew off.

"I got a plan," Tuffnut said.

"Great!" said Ruffnut. "What is it?"

"Blame Snotlout," replied Tuffnut.

The others ran in.

Snotlout pointed to the twins. "Their fault!"

"Hey, he stole our plan," Ruffnut complained to Tuffnut.

"I told you guys to leave it alone," said Hiccup.

The twins jumped off Barf and Belch.

"It jumped us," said Tuffnut. "Sneaky dragon."

"From inside a block of ice?" Grim asked with a soft snarl.

"Very sneaky dragon," Tuffnut added.

"Okay," grumbled Hiccup.

They heard Stoick sigh.

"What is it, Dad?" Hiccup asked.

Stoick was kneeling down, holding a chunk of ice. "When I was a lad, my father's father used to sit me on his knee and tell me stories." He tossed the ice aside and stood up. "I thought they were just tales."

"Tales of what, Stoick?" Grim asked.

"Berserker fleets attacking behind harnessed dragons that brought down lightning from the sky and destroyed everything in their path."

"You don't think the Berserkers could actually control a Skrill?" Hiccup said.

"I didn't think anyone could ride a Night Fury," said Stoick. "We can't take the chance. If the Berserkers find that Skrill and find some way to control it."

"We'll find it, Dad," Hiccup assured. "I promise."

Lightning lit up the sky.

"We cannot do anything else tonight," said Grim. "I do not think the Skrill will get far tonight. We do not know how long it has been in the ice. It will be weak."

\* \* \*

><p>The riders searched for the Skrill the next day. Grim noticed how dark the clouded sky was.<p>

"\*\*Stoick should be pleased rain is on its way,\*\*" said Grim.

"\*\*I do not know if this is truly rain or if it is just the Skrill,\*\*" said Deathshriek.

"Any idea what we do after we find it?" Astrid asked.

"We catch it, we tame it, we train it," Hiccup replied. "Keep it away

from Dagur so he doesn't use it against us."

"Oh, yeah," said Astrid. "That sounds easy enough."

"Actually, the Skrill does have some weaknesses," said Fishlegs. "According to the Book of Dragons, it can't redirect any lightning if it's in the water."

"That's a start," said Hiccup.

"No!" Snotlout yelled, flying up beside Hiccup. "A start would be having any clue where this stupid thing is. We've been circling the island for hours and I'm starving."

"Snotlout, you just said something unintentionally brilliant," Hiccup said.

"Of course I did," Snotlout laughed. He paused. "What was it again?"

"When you wake up in the morning, what's the very first thing you want to do?" asked Hiccup.

"Well, usually, I have to -."

"No, after that," Hiccup said.

"Oh!" Snotlout said. "Eat."

"Exactly," Hiccup said. "Fishlegs, what is the Skrill's food of choice?"

Fishlegs took the lead and flew in the direction of a sheep farm.

Several of the sheep were singed and ash covered. Silent Sven was holding his spear and made several gestures. Behind him was a woman holding a lamb.

"And then you fought off the Skrill with your head?" Astrid tried to decipher.

Sven gave a nod.

"Hey," Snotlout said to Fishlegs, "this guy Silent Sven, remind me not to wrestle any more sheep from his farm."

Sven shoved his spear under Snotlout's throat.

Snotlout threw his hands up and chuckled nervously.

"Uh, he's silent," Fishlegs said, "not deaf."

Astrid grabbed Snotlout by the shoulder and pulled him back. "Any idea which way the Skrill went?" she asked Sven.

Sven shook his head.

Lightning crashed behind them. The riders turned around. The sheep began running for cover.

"That way," Hiccup said.

They got on their dragons and flew to the storm over the water.

"Hold up, everybody!" Hiccup called.

The Skrill was coming for them.

Toothless growled. "\*\*\*We're ready for him.\*\*\*"

"Okay," said Astrid. "Now what?"

"Everybody, stay back," said Hiccup. "If the Skrill sees just one dragon maybe it won't attack."

"Hiccup, it's hungry and agitated," Grim said.

"I know and hopefully this will work," said Hiccup.

He and Toothless went forward. The Skrill came for them. It was a game of chicken and the Skrill flew under Toothless at the last second. The other riders, who were flying around in the clouds, almost collided with the Skrill. Toothless gave chase. Hiccup had Toothless come up and beside it. The Skrill saw them growled.

"Hey there, fella," Hiccup said. He put his hand out to the Skrill. "You've been asleep for a long time, huh? I'm guessing you're pretty cranky."

The Skrill sparked and snarled.

"And hungry, too," Hiccup added.

The Skrill flew off and came around in front of Toothless, sparking and lighting up the clouds. Lightning danced around.

"Hiccup!" Astrid yelled.

The rest of the riders flew towards them to help Hiccup. Toothless flew out of the way. The Skrill took the opportunity to fire a blast of lightning at the other riders. Chaos erupted with riders yelling orders to their dragons and crying out in alarm for others. The Skrill flew into the clouds.

"Wow," said Fishlegs, wiping his brow. "That was impressive."

"Sure!" Snotlout said. "If by impressive you mean terrifying!"

"Follow me!" Hiccup called. "I've got an idea."

They flew down until they were below the clouds and could see the ocean.

"I'm going to dive through the clouds from above and drive that Skrill down to you guys so we can all drive it into the water," Hiccup explained.

"Got it," Tuffnut said. He frowned. "No, I don't. Sorry, can we go back to the first part about how you're in the clouds. Or is the cloud in you? It's all sort of nebulous for me, like a cloud, in fact."

Hiccup and Grim both face-palmed.

"Just do what everyone else does," Hiccup told him.

"If you can manage that," muttered Grim.

Astrid flew beside Hiccup. "And how exactly are we going to find that Skrill in that cloud?"

"Toothless doesn't need to see to find something, remember?" Hiccup said.

"Does that work in clouds?" Astrid asked.

"There's only one way to find out." Hiccup steered Toothless up into the clouds.

Grim flew up beside Astrid.

"Shouldn't you go with him?" Astrid asked.

"I don't think that is a good idea," said Grim. "They need to focus on the Skrill and not on the rest of us."

They heard the Skrill's rasping cry and Toothless' howling roar. They both flew over the rest of the riders.

"\*\*Deathshriek, fire,\*\*" Grim ordered.

The others joined in firing at the Skrill, but trying not to hurt it, only drive it into the water.

The twins flew up beside it.

"Time to give this dragon a bath," said Tuffnut.

"I bet he hates it as much as we do," Ruffnut added.

Barf let out some gas and Belch was just about to light it when it blew up in their faces.

Astrid and Stormfly were almost hit by a boulder. "We're under attack!"

Hiccup and Fishlegs were almost shot by arrows.

Grim and Deathshriek scanned the area for the Skrill. Grim looked behind him to see Hookfang and Snotlout. And the Skrill behind them.

"Snotlout! Behind!" Grim yelled.

Snotlout turned around to see the Skrill sparking. "Oh, no," he said quietly. He steered Hookfang out of the way of the Skrill's lightning

blasts. One clipped him in the helmet and he started spouting gibberish.

"\*\*Hookfang, get Snotlout out of here!\*\*" Grim ordered.

Hiccup turned from the dragons and down to the water. "Uh, is that?"

Grim heard him and looked down. There were three ships on the water. Everyone recognized the crest painted on the sails. "Dagur."

The next wave of attacks came.

"Let's get out of range before they reload," Hiccup said.

Meatlug shot passed Toothless.

"Already ahead of you!" Fishlegs said with a wave.

"Let's go, bud," Hiccup told Toothless.

The riders flew away from the Berserkers and took a sea stack to rest.

Hiccup noticed Snotlout's head was smoking. "Hey, uh, Snotlout? Are you okay?"

"He's better than okay," said Tuffnut. "Did you see that lightning bolt to the head?"

Snotlout glared at Tuffnut and opened his mouth. "Blehdeh iznak!" He looked surprised.

"Tuffnut's right," Astrid said, grinning. "Better than okay."

Snotlout tried to retort, but it was only more gibberish.

"And making more sense than usual," Astrid added.

"Okay! He's out of it!" Hiccup exclaimed. "So the rest of us will -."

"Shmaggie!" Snotlout exclaimed with his arms crossed.

There was pause.

"Snotlout, we have no idea what you're saying," Hiccup said.

"Sure we do," said Tuffnut. "He said, 'I'm perfectly fine.'"

"Shmaggie!"

"Said it again," said Tuffnut. He turned to Snotlout. "I told them."

Snotlout continued to speak gibberish angrily as Tuffnut turned back to the others. "What? I speak post-lightning Snotlout."



Hiccup put his hand to his forehead. "How many times has this kid been hit by lightning?"

"Often enough," Tuffnut answered casually.

"Feh, gurgle," Snotlout said.

"Twelve? Twelve times," Tuffnut translated. Snotlout exclaimed something angrily. "He said, 'Enough talk. Dagur's all mine.' And, 'Tuffnut is the toughest of us all.'" Snotlout protested. "He implied the last part."

Hiccup groaned. "Well, you heard the man, Astrid. Take Snotlout and Fishlegs and try to keep the Berserker ships occupied. The twins and I will go after the Skrill. If Dagur gets his hands on it first, we won't stand a chance. Grim, I know you want another shot at Dagur."

"I'll go with Astrid and the others," said Grim. "If you need help, call for Deathshriek." He flexed his fingers, the Gronkle iron tipped claws peeking out. "It will only take one dragon to handle Dagur."

"Be careful," Astrid told Hiccup. "The lightning is attracted to metal and you two are wearing a lot more of it than the rest of us."

They split up. Astrid and Grim led Fishlegs and Snotlout to the Berserker ships.

"What did you mean when you said it's only going to take one dragon to handle Dagur?" Astrid asked Grim.

Grim simply looked at her.

Astrid's mouth opened. "You can't be serious."

"I am," Grim replied darkly. He had Deathshriek fly ahead.

Astrid shook her head. "Stormfly, let's rock some boats."

They swooped down and began setting the boats on fire.

"Stay on target!" Dagur ordered. "He's tricky, that Hiccup!"

There was a thud behind him.

"Dagur!"

Dagur whirled around to see Grim. He grinned wickedly. "Hello, Grim. Come to protect your brother?"

"I came to keep the Skrill out of your hands," Grim said.

"I'd like to see you try," said Dagur, drawing his sword.

Dagur was no Outcast. He was fast and agile. If Grim wasn't careful, he could be sliced up in moments. He used his dragon claw gloves to parry.

From above, Deathshriek paused his attacking to look at Grim. Grim was fighting like a dragon and faring very well. A Berserker decided to sneak up behind them and try to attack Grim.

"\*\*Grim, behind!\*\*" Deathshriek warned.

Grim parried and turned to the Berserker. He grabbed the sword out of his hand and kicked the Berserker overboard. He completed his circle, sword in hand, and met Dagur blade to blade.

"Now we are even," Grim said.

"With weapons," said Dagur. "But not skill. You may be able to beat me in a wrestling match, but you're not going to beat me with swords."

"Are you so certain?" Grim asked.

"Yes. Yes, I am."

Grim attacked. They crossed swords and Grim pushed his weight against the blades. "Then prove it."

Dagur let out a battle cry and pushed Grim away.

"\*\*Good. They both have swords,\*\*" Deathshriek said to Stormfly as he flew passed her. "\*\*He can keep him busy.\*\*"

"\*\*Is Grim any good with a sword?\*\*" Stormfly asked.

Deathshriek flashed his teeth in a smile. He noticed the sky light up and thunder boom loudly across the water. He wondered what that was, but had no time to think about it or he would be shot down by a Berserker archer.

Grim and Dagur continued their fight, blocking out all the noise around them. It was a deadly dance. Their fight was interrupted when Grim was struck in the back of the head. He crumpled on the deck.

The Berserker who struck Grim, who was the Berserker second-in-command, pointed to the sky. "Sir."

Dagur turned around. Toothless and the Skrill were fighting just within the first layer of thick clouds. Both dragons were easy to see with the Skrill shooting lightning at the Night Fury. "Well, well. It doesn't look like Hiccup will catch my Skrill either."

Grim came around. The blow had only stunned him and he would have a headache later.

"Well, perhaps we should withdraw. Come back for the Skrill another day," the second-in-command said.

Grim guessed he was the one who hit him in the head.

Dagur rolled his eyes. "Um, didn't I throw you overboard?"

"Well, I am an excellent swimmer," the second-in-command said, folding his hands proudly.

Dagur threw the Viking overboard again.

Grim silently thanked Dagur, though he wanted to do that.

"Press on!" Dagur yelled.

Grim slowly tightened his grip on the sword and thought about where Dagur was. Cracking one eye open, he saw Dagur was looking up at the sky at the side of the ship. Grim got to his feet, planning to knock Dagur overboard.

There was a thunderous noise and Grim heard Hiccup scream. He looked up and saw a mass of black scales falling towards the ship. Grim jumped out of the way before Toothless landed on him.

Dagur had also dropped to the deck. "Hiccup," he snarled.

Toothless got to his feet and shook his head. His eyes narrowed at Dagur and he growled.

"Sorry about your deck," Hiccup apologized.

Grim jumped onto Toothless' back behind Hiccup. Toothless took off, flying away with a howling roar. They caught up with the other riders. Toothless did a barrel-roll and Grim jumped off and onto Deathshriek's back as he did.

Hiccup looked around. "Did anybody see where the Skrill went?"

"No," replied Astrid.

Fishlegs replied, "Nope!"

They turned to Snotlout. "Nerfblurt."

"Anyone see where the twins ended up?" Fishlegs asked.

"No," replied Grim. "I was focused on Dagur. \*\*Did any of you see where they went?\*"

"\*\*No,\*\*" the dragons replied.

"How far could they have gone?" Grim asked.

"That blast when Toothless and the Skrill's attacks combined was powerful," said Hiccup. "The blast could have knocked them far away. We have to look for them."

\* \* \*

><p>They spent the night looking for the twins. Deathshriek flew over the ocean.<p>

"\*\*Barf! Belch!\*\*" Grim roared in Zippleback dialect.

There was a Night Fury roar.

"Ruff! Tuff!"

Grim turned Deathshriek in Hiccup and Toothless' direction. "Hiccup! It's getting late. We cannot do much more with only moonlight."

"We have to keep looking," said Hiccup.

"We should at least check in with the others," Grim said.

"Okay," said Hiccup.

They returned to the Academy. Hiccup went and got a lantern that Toothless lit for him along with a few other things.

Meatlug landed on the cliff. Fishlegs got off her back. "Hiccup, Grim, any sign of them yet?"

"None," replied Hiccup. "The other riders have come in for the night. They're resting their dragons."

"I don't blame them," said Fishlegs. "I mean, look at Meatlug. She's sleep-flying."

Meatlug swerved in the air, asleep, drooling lava. She startled awake and forced herself to stay awake.

"I got some provisions," Hiccup said. "I'm going back out."

"What are you going to do?" Fishlegs asked. "Fly all night?"

"If I have to, yes," Hiccup answered.

Grim turned to Deathshriek.

"\*\*I can keep going,\*\*" Deathshriek said. "\*\*We've flown all night before.\*\*"

"Are you sure that's a good idea?" Fishlegs asked.

"Well, I can't rest knowing the twins are lost out there somewhere," said Hiccup, climbing onto Toothless.

Fishlegs sighed. "You're right. We'll go with you."

Meatlug landed hard on the ground next to Fishlegs, hitting him hard enough that he stumbled. She was sound asleep. Fishlegs patted her on the head as she began drooling lava again.

"Nah, looks like you guys need some rest." Hiccup passed the lantern to Fishlegs. "I'll be fine."

Toothless took off.

"I am going with them," Grim said. "You do not have to worry."

Deathshriek followed Toothless.

\* \* \*

><p>The two dragons and their riders flew into the clouds that were roaring and flashing with thunder and lightning.<p>

"You know, maybe we've been looking at this whole thing the wrong way," said Hiccup. "Maybe the twins went after the Skrill."

"Do you think the twins had enough sense between them to do something like that?" Grim asked.

"The twins love anything destructive," Hiccup answered. "The Skrill is attracted to lightning. Maybe if we find the Skrill, we find Ruff and Tuff. It can't hurt, right?"

"\*\*Only if we get struck by lightning,\*\*" Toothless said.

"We've tried everything else," said Hiccup. "Let's go!"

Things became more dangerous as lightning arched across the clouds. A bolt struck in front of Toothless.

"Whoa! Watch your tail!" Hiccup called.

"\*\*Watch your leg!\*\*" Toothless roared.

"And I'll watch my leg," Hiccup said.

Grim chuckled. Hiccup understood more Dragonese than he thought.

They continued on, Toothless dodging more lightning than Deathshriek had to.

"Hang in there, everybody!" Hiccup took out his spyglass to search. A bolt of lightning startled him and he almost dropped the spyglass. "Okay! Gronkle iron and lightning â€" not a terrific combo."

"I believe we all can agree on no more stormy flights unless it is absolutely necessary," Grim called.

"Agreed!"

"\*\*Agreed,\*\*" both dragons added.

"Let's get out of here," said Hiccup.

They made their way out of the clouds and into clear, calm sky. They looked down at the ocean. There was an island below them.

"Outcast Island."

"\*\*Outcast Island.\*\*"

"I know, bud," Hiccup told Toothless. "But we've got no choice. We have to set down and wait out the storm."

"We will stay close to the Outcast village," said Grim. "There will not be as many wild dragons. We will need the peace."

They landed on the island. The four of them crept around until they were overlooking the dragon ring. The torches were lit and there was activity.

"That's a lot of Outcasts," Hiccup muttered. "What are you up to, Alvin?"

"All I know is that he's planning something big with that Skrill." Ruffnut popped up nearby.

"Alvin has the Skrill?" Hiccup asked. His eyes widened. "Wait! Ruff? You're alive! I-I-I don't believe it. Where's Tuff?"

Ruffnut looked at her feet.

"Oh, no," breathed Grim.

"He didn't make it, Hiccup," Ruffnut said softly.

"What?" blurted Hiccup.

Ruffnut looked up at them. "Kidding! He's right behind you."

They turned around to the dead tree behind them.

"What's up, Hiccup, Grim?" Tuffnut's voice came from inside the tree.

The brothers stared at the tree.

"Cool disguise, huh?" Tuffnut said. "It's kind of itchy."

"Uh, yeah," said Hiccup. "Not bad."

"Yeah, yeah, Tuff hollowed out that tree so he couldn't be seen," Ruffnut said. "Problem is he can't move."

Toothless and Deathshriek inspected the tree.

"And I have bark beetles in my pants," Tuffnut added. "I'm starting to like that."

Toothless took one sniff of the tree and shook his head, sticking out his tongue in disgust. Deathshriek was a bit more mature about it and turned away with a slight gagging noise.

"Hey, fellas, a little to the left. Scratch around down there," Tuffnut told the beetles. "See what you can find."

"I am disturbed," Grim told them.

"That's an image I can do without," Hiccup added. "Wait a second. How did you guys get up here?"

Ruffnut answered, "Alvin grabbed the Skrill out of the water, we decided to follow it."

"Weird, right?" Tuffnut said.

"No, actually it was good you followed it," said Hiccup.

"We knew that," said Tuffnut. He added hesitantly, "That's why we did it."

Hiccup turned away and took out his spyglass. He lay across the rock overlooking the dragon ring. "Okay, let's figure out what Alvin plans on doing with that dragon."

The Outcasts dragged the Skrill out of its cage.

"Yep, there it is," said Hiccup.

"Yeah," said Tuffnut.

"Man, this is not good," said Hiccup.

"No."

"We are in serious trouble," Hiccup added.

"With a capital 'T,'" Tuffnut went on. "No, 'S.' Wait, would you capitalize 'serious' or 'trouble?' Both?"

Hiccup lowered his spyglass and growled as he, Ruffnut, and Grim turned around to glare at Tuffnut.

"I'll shut up now," said Tuffnut.

They turned back to the arena.

"Hang on," said Hiccup. "Mildew."

Grim growled.

"That's weird," said Hiccup. "Those look like Berserker soldiers. Dagur? Dagur and Alvin together with the Skrill? Really not good."

Their dragons growled low.

Lightning arced across the sky. It charged up the Skrill and it fired it at Mildew, Dagur sidestepping at the last second. The soldiers put the Skrill back in its cage.

If circumstances were different, Grim would have laughed at Mildew for being shocked. However, he couldn't find any amusement in the situation at the moment even if he tried. In the meantime, Tuffnut had made his way out of the tree and now lay beside them watching the arena.

"We have to sneak into town and find out what Dagur and Alvin are up to," said Hiccup. "I can't go. They'd recognize me. Ruff."

"Outcast food gives me gas," she said.

Hiccup rolled his eyes. "Yet another image I can live without. Okay, Tuff, looks like you're up. You need to go down there and get as much info as you can without being seen."

"Way ahead of you," Tuffnut said enthusiastically. "I'll move like the wind. They won't even see me coming!"

Tuffnut began to climb down the rock. He didn't get very far before he fell.

"Forget being seen," said Grim. "He will wake the dead."

"Did you see where he fell?" Hiccup asked.

Grim hissed. "Right in front of a guard."

Hiccup groaned. "I should have sent you, Grim."

"Why didn't you?" Ruffnut asked.

"Because I need him here." Hiccup turned to Grim. "I know the Skrill might not listen to you, but we need every advantage we can get."

"You need me here if I need to talk to the Skrill and see if I can get it to cooperate with us," said Grim.

"Exactly," said Hiccup.

They watched as Tuffnut managed to talk himself out of potentially being captured or killed.

"He's in," said Hiccup. "Now we wait."

"Oh, no," Grim breathed.

"What?" Hiccup asked.

"Did you forget Mildew is down there?" Grim asked.

Hiccup let his head fall into his hands. "Oh, no."

\* \* \*

><p>They waited. Ruffnut took an hour to sleep. Hiccup took an hour after her and then Grim. Tuffnut didn't return until after dawn. The four riders sat in a circle and Tuffnut gave his report.<p>

"The plan is to smash those dirty Berkians to pieces with both fleets. It's going to be awesome."

"You do realize we're the Berkians," Hiccup said, pointing to himself.

"Oh, right," said Tuffnut. "Still going to be awesome."

"Two fleets and a Skrill are not going to be easy to defeat," Grim said. "We would need all the dragons we could muster and Berk's full fighting force."

Hiccup got up and looked at the sky, putting his hand to his chin as he thought about what to do.

Tuffnut interrupted. "No, Alvin made it very clear; Dagur doesn't get the Skrill until after they destroy Berk. I think they have trust issues."

Hiccup turned around. "Wait, what did you say?"



"I said they have trust issues," repeated Tuffnut.

"No, you said Dagur doesn't get the Skrill until after the attack," said Hiccup. "Think about it. No Skrill, no alliance. No alliance, no invasion."

Grim saw where this was going. "If they do not have the Skrill, the plans of both sides will fall apart."

"Exactly," said Hiccup. "Tuff, I need you to go back down there and distract the guards. Toothless and I are going to free that Skrill."

"I'm coming with you," said Grim. "You'll need me to speak to the Skrill."

"Uh, hang on a sec," said Tuffnut. "Dagur threatened to cut my legs off."

"So?" Ruffnut asked.

"Just wanted to get that out there," Tuffnut said. He looked at them before scoffing. "Fine, I'm going. And my legs are on your head. I'm not â€" you know what I'm saying. You'll be thinking about these legs if I lose them." Tuffnut walked away.

Toothless and Deathshriek flew down to the arena a few minutes after Tuffnut left. Hiccup and Grim looked over the side of the arena.

"Good job, Tuff," Hiccup said. "That was quick."

They slipped down into the arena. The cage was opened.

Hiccup reached down and picked up a cut rope. "It's gone."

There was a clank above them. "Oh, good," said Tuffnut. "I thought I was too late." He swung between bars and dropped down. "Nice job with the guards by the way."

"What are you talking about?" asked Hiccup. "And where's the Skrill?"

Tuffnut turned around and looked at the empty cage. "Uh-oh."

"Uh, yeah, uh-oh," said Hiccup.

"Well, if you don't have the Skrill, and I don't have the Skrill, then who has the Skrill?" Tuffnut exclaimed.

The door to the arena opened accompanied by shouting.

"Gotta go," said Hiccup.

They all hid behind the rock of one of the cages.

"The Skrill is gone!" someone yelled. "Sound the alarm!"

Someone sounded the horn.

Hiccup climbed up on Toothless' back. "Tuff, you go get Ruff. Grim and I are going to try to find that Skrill before Dagur does."

Grim jumped up on Deathshriek and followed Toothless out of the arena. They flew high above the island so they could see everything below them.

"Down there," said Grim.

An Outcast ship and a Berserker ship sailed towards each other. The stopped and the brothers could see Alvin and Dagur arguing. Dagur was gesturing wildly.

"Do you have a feeling things are about to get really bad?" Hiccup asked Grim.

Dagur twirled his axe and cut a rope to his sail. The sail rolled up and revealed the tethered Skrill. It sparked and roared. Alvin drew his sword and leapt off his ship and onto Dagur's. He landed the first blow and sent Dagur sprawling. Dagur got back on his feet and attacked Alvin.

Hiccup and Grim flew over to get a better look before finding a place to watch.

Dagur dropped his axe and grabbed the ropes attached the Skrill. He pulled at them and the Skrill fired a blast of lightning at Alvin. Alvin got out of the way. He finally jumped over the side of the ship and into the water. Dagur had the Skrill aim at the water and fired. The water lit up with lightning. Several fish floated to the surface.

Savage and the other Outcasts got on Dagur's ship, prepared to attack. Dagur said something to Savage.

"That's not good," said Hiccup.

"Dagur has the Skrill and I am certain Dagur just offered the Outcasts to join him," said Grim.

"We need to come up with a new plan," said Hiccup. "And fast."

They flew away.

"Dagur has the Skrill," Grim said.

"I noticed," said Hiccup.

"No need to be sarcastic," snapped Grim. "The attack on Berk will happen now, but I don't think Dagur will destroy Berk completely. He is looking for you and Toothless."

Hiccup's face lit up. "Grim, you just gave me an idea."

They flew around to the harbor where Dagur was preparing the fleet.

"Now that this whole Alvin thing is behind us, we can lure Hiccup and his Night Fury into battle," they heard Dagur say.

Grim and Deathshriek were invisible as they hovered close by next to Hiccup and Toothless.

"Why wait!" Hiccup shouted.

Dagur and Savage whirled around.

"I'm right here, Dagur. Me and my Night Fury."

"Hiccup," spat Dagur.

"I thought we could settle this like real Vikings," Hiccup said.  
"Just you and me."

Dagur growled in anger.

"Sir, don't let him beat you," said Savage. "We have the advantage in numbers."

Dagur knocked Savage in the face and jumped onto his ship. He grabbed the ropes of the Skrill. "Me and my Skrill against you and your Night Fury." He turned the Skrill around. "I like those odds."

The fight between Toothless and the Skrill began. Toothless flew off while Dagur was towed below the Skrill as it flew.

Once both dragons were out of sight, Grim began his part of the plan.  
"\*\*\*Let's go, Deathshriek. Burn these ships to ash.\*\*\*"

Deathshriek reappeared and swooped down and began breathing fire at the ships.

"\*\*\*Perfect,\*\*\*" said Grim. "\*\*\*Now to help Hiccup and Toothless.\*\*\*"

Deathshriek turned in the air and flew in the direction they saw the dragons fly off in. It did not take long for them to catch up since both dragons had stopped.

"That's it?" Dagur laughed. "I was hoping for something more challenging."

Hiccup and Toothless were on one cliff and Dagur and the Skrill were on a higher cliff.

"So was I," said Hiccup.

Toothless and the Skrill fired at each other.

"\*\*\*This is one dragon fight I wish we stay out of,\*\*\*" said Deathshriek. "\*\*\*Night Furies and Skrills are Chaos Bringers for a reason.\*\*\*"

"\*\*\*Agreed,\*\*\*" said Grim.

Toothless landed on the cliff he started on.

"Any last words, Hiccup?" Dagur asked.

"I got nothing," Hiccup said easily. "How about you, bud?"

"\*\*Just this!\*\*" he yelled and fired at the Skrill.

The Skrill charged up. Lightning shot down the ropes and hit Dagur. He was knocked off the cliff to the ground. He got up and panted for a few seconds before collapsing again.

"I really don't think he's gonna be leading an invasion anytime soon," Hiccup said to Toothless.

The Skrill attacked them.

"Wish I can say the same for this guy!" Hiccup yelled.

Toothless took off with the Skrill on his tail.

"\*\*We have to help,\*\*" said Grim.

"\*\*It will be better if we stay back,\*\*" said Deathshriek. "\*\*We need to find the twins and Barf and Belch.\*\*" Deathshriek turned around and started looking for the twins.

They noticed the Zippleback flying towards them.

"Ruffnut! Tuffnut!" Grim shouted. "Hiccup's in trouble! We have to help them!"

"Got it!" said Tuffnut.

Deathshriek sharply turned around and they rushed to get to Hiccup.

They flew over the open water.

Grim pointed at the glacier. "There's the glacier where we found the Skrill. They were flying in that direction."

They flew over to the glacier. The twins were the first to notice Toothless and Hiccup to emerge from the glacier. They had Barf and Belch fire next to where they flew out of.

"Hey!" Tuffnut shouted. "Why do you get to have all the fun?"

"Yeah, this job was made for us!" yelled Ruffnut.

They steered Barf and Belch down and fire into the cut where Toothless had flown out of. It melted and filled up with water and then refroze around the Skrill.

The dragons landed and looked at the freezing ice.

"Guys, let's go home," said Hiccup.

"Thought you'd never ask," said Ruffnut.

"I am going to miss some of those Outcast guys," said Tuffnut. "They could really carry a tune."

"I know, right," said Ruffnut.

"Hooligan tribe, won't you come out tonight, come out tonight, come out tonight," Tuffnut sang as they flew away.

"I won't miss Dagur," Hiccup said to Toothless, "that's for sure."

Toothless spread his wings and took off.

Grim chuckled and Deathshriek followed.

Ruffnut yelled at her brother, "They can carry a tune. Not you!"

## 12. Chapter 12

**\*\*Posting early on a Saturday morning to be an alternative to Saturday morning cartoons. I'm a little bummed out that no one commented on my last chapter. Oh, well. Maybe if I get two or three reviews before 2 p.m. eastern time, I'll put up another chapter. Heck, I might even spring the answer to the challenge early.\*\***

**\*\*A little warning for this chapter: Grim does a bit of speaking in human and Dragonese in the same breath, so it's not a typo if you see one sentence bold in Dragonese and the rest of it in normal font.\*\***

**\*\*CHALLENGE: After this installment of the Dragon Trainer, Dragon Speaker series ends, I am doing another installment that will be a crossover. What story do you think I'll be crossing HTTYD with? \*\***

**\*\*HINT: It is a book series that was turned into an anime involving three people on a quest to save their kingdom from evil. The book series (I am a purist and will be using only the book series in the crossover) involves magic, monsters, and in later books, dragons. The author's initials are E.R.\*\***

**\*\*Previous answers:\*\***

**\*\*Eragon\*\***

**\*\*Harry Potter\*\***

**\*\*Danny Phantom\*\***

**\*\*Code: LYOKO\*\***

**\*\*Elephant Run\*\***

**\*\*Erec Rex\*\***

**\* \* \***

><p>There was a little boy in the village that all the riders knew. It was hard not to notice him because he kept coming to the Academy and caused a bit of trouble for them. Today he had come in with a sheep wearing fake wings and a flame shooter made from bellows. He had ridden the sheep through the Academy and accidentally lit a couple crates on fire. Luckily, the riders were nearby and saw what was

happening.<p>

Hiccup dumped a bucket of water on it to put it out. "Gustav, how many times have we told you you can't play in here?"

"I'm not playing," said Gustav. "I'm dragon training."

Snotlout scoffed. "Poor kid. Ever since I let him into my inner circle, he wants to be just like his hero; me."

"Gross and annoying?" asked Astrid.

"No, a dragon rider," Gustav answered, putting his hands on his hips and smiling.

"Look around, kid," said Snotlout. "All the dragon riding positions are taken. So unless one of us kicks the bucket, you're out of luck."

Grim found it sad no one wanted to train Gustav. Yes, he was young and possibly too small for whatever dragon they allowed him to train with, but he was willing to learn.

\* \* \*

><p>A few days later, while they were having a Dagur meeting, Snotlout yelled, "I'm gonna kick the bucket!"<p>

"Snotlout, do you mind?" Hiccup asked. "We're having a Dagur meeting."

"Dagur's here?" Tuffnut asked.

Snotlout ignored him. "In the last week I've seen three of the Five Signposts of Valhalla."

"We know!" they all chorused.

"You know? And you're just standing there talking about stupid Dagur? One of your bravest and most treasured warriors is about to leave this world forever!" screamed Snotlout.

"Look on the bright side," said Tuffnut. "At least you'll be in eternal paradise."

"So will we," said Astrid.

"Joke all you want about me," said Snotlout. "But what about Hookfang?"

Hookfang lay down and turned to the wall. "\*\*\*Leave me out of this.\*\*"

"The thought of him without me for the rest of his life, it's just -."

"Are you done?" Hiccup asked his cousin.

"No," replied Snotlout. "Not even close. Though devastated and still in pre-mourning, Gustav has volunteered to carry on the Snotlout

legacy." He pulled the smaller boy out from behind an obstacle.

"It's an honor," said Gustav.

"Please tell me he's not going to fly around saying 'Oy, oy, oy,'" said Astrid with a roll of her eyes.

"Great idea," said Snotlout. "Gustav, make a note of that."

"Snotlout, the Five Signposts of Valhalla is nothing but an old wives tale," said Hiccup.

"Oh yeah?" challenged Snotlout. "Then why have I seen the flying fish, the weeping rock, and the singing trees?" He and Gustav counted off on their fingers, but Snotlout put four fingers up. Gustav quickly jumped up and fixed that.

Fishlegs decided to throw in his answer. "You probably saw salmon spawning, wet rocks on the beach, and gust of wind."

"Besides, the Five Signposts of Valhalla are only supposed to happen to great warriors," said Astrid.

Snotlout rolled his eyes. "Obviously. What's your point?"

"Even if it were true, which it's not, you can't just pick someone to replace you," said Hiccup.

"Well, you guys threw out my original plan," said Snotlout.

"To bury Hookfang alive beside you?" cried Astrid.

Snotlout walked over to his dragon. "He would gladly sacrifice himself for his beloved master. Trust me."

Hookfang got up and took off, smacking Snotlout with his tail. "\*\*\*Not going to happen.\*\*"

Snotlout landed in front of Hiccup.

"Okay," said Hiccup. "Let's just say for argument's sake you've seen the three of the Five Signposts. It doesn't mean anything. There's still two left."

A dead chicken fell from the sky, startling them.

Snotlout screamed and jumped up. "Oh, no! Oh, no! The fourth signpost; the bird of death!"

"It's not the bird of death," said Hiccup. "It's just a dead chicken. It's not the same. Right, guys?"

"Yes, it is," said the twins. "Definitely. Bird of death."

Snotlout knocked Gustav on the helmet. "We're on the clock, little man. We're starting your training immediately."

The other riders got on their dragons.

Hiccup groaned in exasperation. "Fine! The rest of us have to keep an eye on Outcast Island. While we're gone, try not to take anyone else with you to eternal paradise."

"I make no promises," said Snotlout.

The riders left the Academy. Hiccup leaned over to Grim. "Can you stay here and make sure no one gets killed?"

Grim nodded.

Grim and Deathshriek stayed behind, invisible, watching Snotlout, Hookfang, and Gustav. They took up places at the top of the arena, well out of the way.

"Okay, pay attention, Gustav," said Snotlout.

"\*\*You cannot be serious. You are teaching him to be like you. Poor hatchling,\*\*" Hookfang said.

"This is a Monstrous Nightmare. Not just anyone can handle one of these bad boys."

Hookfang put his head down to Gustav.

"Whoa." Gustav put his hand out to touch Hookfang.

Snotlout slapped the hand away. "I'm sorry. I don't recall saying you could touch him. Did I say that?"

Gustav rubbed his hand. "Uh, no."

"The first thing we need to cover is how to proper way to mount a dragon," said Snotlout, moving over next to Hookfang. "This has to be done in a way that lets the dragon know who exactly is the boss."

He jumped onto Hookfang's saddle and grabbed his horns. Hookfang took off immediately and did a lap around the Academy. He landed and Snotlout got off.

"Yeah, yeah, I got this," said Gustav. He took a running start and tripped, rolling over in front of Hookfang. Hookfang picked Gustav up gently by his shirt and placed him on his neck. Hookfang took off, knocking Snotlout down with his wing.

Snotlout got up and fixed his helmet. "We'll work on that."

"\*\*It appears Hookfang has taken a shine to the boy,\*\*" said Deathshriek. He turned in Grim's direction, unable to see the invisible boy. "\*\*And the boy appears to have a way with Nightmares.\*\*"

"\*\*It could be just Hookfang,\*\*" said Grim.

"\*\*Myself as well,\*\*" said Deathshriek. "\*\*If you chose to train the boy, I would have no problem with him learning how to ride on my back. I may even wear a saddle.\*\*"

Grim looked over in the direction of the invisible dragon.



"\*\*Certainly a shine. But a saddle?\*\*"

"\*\*Perhaps some straps for him to hold on to,\*\*" said Deathshriek.  
"\*\*The saddle idea never appealed to me.\*\*"

The other riders returned and Grim and Deathshriek became visible again.

Hiccup walked over to him. "How's it going?"

"Very well," Grim replied. "The only injury so far is to Snotlout caused by Hookfang."

"Oh, nothing major then," said Hiccup.

They sat down to watch Gustav's training.

Grim looked at their group. "Where are the twins?"

Hiccup looked around. "Not sure. I'm surprised they're not here."

"Eyes front, recruit!" Snotlout ordered. "Now pay attention to everything I say."

Gustav held on to Hookfang's horns and faced front. "Sir, yes, sir!"

Fishlegs looked at the others. "This should go well."

The twins came running.

"We're not too late, are we?" Tuffnut asked, he and his sister taking a seat next to Fishlegs.

"Nope, just about to get interesting," said Astrid.

"Oh, thank goodness. I hate missing violence," said Tuffnut.

"A Monstrous Nightmare in the hands of a capable rider, a lame, is a weapon of unmatched fire power. It must be treated with the upmost respect."

Snotlout was cut off by Hookfang shooting him with a low heated stream of fire. Hookfang then turned and fired up at the riders, scorching the stone beneath their feet.

Snotlout got to his feet. "We'll work on that, recruit." He looked at Hookfang. "Was that fun for you?"

"\*\*Shut up.\*\*" Hookfang fired again.

\* \* \*

><p>A little while later, they moved onto something else. Snotlout and Gustav each carried a fish and Hookfang was dozing lightly, but still away of everything that was going on.<p>

"Okay, Gustav, feeding time is bonding time for a dragon and its rider," said Snotlout, tossing a fish in his hand. "And this is how

we bond. Hookfang, eat!"

Hookfang reared up and caught the fish in his mouth. He spat the bones back out in Snotlout's face. Snotlout glared at the dragon. Hookfang ignored him.

"You're up, kid," Snotlout said, patting Gustav's helmet. "Bring the heat." For some reason, Snotlout took a few steps forward.

Gustav yelled, "Hookfang, eat!" He threw the fish, but his aim was poor. It went high and landed on Snotlout's head.

Hookfang jumped up and shoved Snotlout in his mouth, shaking him.

"We'll work on that," Snotlout called, his voice muffled.

\* \* \*

><p>When it was safe to enter the Academy again, they all came down inside. Fishlegs and Hiccup had a map spread out on a barrel and were discussing what they were going to do about Dagur.<p>

Snotlout took the opportunity to make a speech. "I know it's going to be hard on you all when I'm no longer here, especially you, Astrid."

Astrid rolled her eyes.

"But I don't want any tears. I want you to remember me with joy in your hearts. So think of the good times we all had together."

Grim was trying to ignore Snotlout as much as he could, but noticed, and wished he didn't, him scratching the seat of his pants.

"It is by the power vested in me that I hereby pass the Hookfang horns to Gustav. Go with Thor, little man, for he will watch over you with lightning bolts and a giant hammer."

Gustav ran over and jumped on Hookfang's back.

Hiccup whirled around. "Okay, this has gone on long enough. First of all, you are not dying!"

Snotlout hushed him. "Hiccup, it's okay. Denial is part of the grieving process."

"Second of all, no one vested you with any power," Hiccup went on.

"No one," Tuffnut added.

"And even if they did -."

"Which they didn't," said Tuffnut.

"Gustav is in no way ready to be a member of this Academy," Hiccup went on.

"No way," said Tuffnut.

"That's correct, Hiccup," said Fishlegs. "There's way more to being a dragon rider than feeding it and getting on its back."

"Neither of which he can do very well, anyway," Astrid added.

"\*\*True,\*\*" Hookfang huffed sadly.

"None of us are perfect, except for me," said Snotlout. "Fishlegs is afraid of heights, the twins can't count passed nine, Grim's social skills are lacking, Astrid obviously has anger issues." He turned to Hiccup and looked at him. "Well, enough said."

Hiccup groaned.

Snotlout went over and touched Astrid's hair. "Oh, Astrid, what might have been."

Astrid reached up and bent Snotlout's fingers backwards.

"I won't feel pain in Valhalla," winced Snotlout.

Hiccup let out an exasperated groan. "Snotlout, for the last time, you are not going to Valhalla!"

"Runaway sheep!" Tuffnut yelled.

A group of sheep came charging into the Academy and swarmed around Snotlout.

"The shepherd's curse," said Fishlegs. "That's -."

Astrid gasped. "The fifth signpost?"

Hiccup put his hand to his head. "Oh, this cannot be happening."

Snotlout let out a scream. "Avenge me! Have lamb for dinner!" And promptly passed out.

\* \* \*

><p>A few minutes later Snotlout woke up. "This is Valhalla?" he asked. "What a rip-off!"<p>

"Nope, still Berk," said Hiccup. "You fainted."

"More proof that my warrior's body is failing me," said Snotlout. "I don't have much time. Hiccup, you have to let Gustav take my place."

Grim decided to jump in. "Hiccup does not have to do anything. Besides, Gustav is not ready to take anyone's place."

"Well, train me, anyway," said Gustav. "Isn't that what you do here? I thought this was a dragon training academy."

"Well, Gustav, this academy born out of timing and necessity," Hiccup said.

"I thought Stoick gave it to us and said it was just some dragon training academy," Tuffnut said.

"That's not helping," said Hiccup. "Gustav, we learned to be dragon riders the only way we knew how; by doing. It was dangerous, foolhardy â€"."

Ruffnut jumped in. "And awesome!"

Hiccup pushed her away. "Still not helping."

Astrid decided to help Hiccup. She got down on Gustav's level. "What Hiccup's trying to say, Gustav, is that you need experience."

"The rider needs experience, the dragon needs experience, and the rider and the dragon together need experience."

"Experience, huh?" said Gustav. He walked away.

"Sorry, Hookfang," Snotlout called. "I guess this means we're back to plan one. Ruff, Tuff, start digging."

Hookfang came over and blew hot air in Snotlout's face. "\*\*\*Foolish boy.\*\*"

\* \* \*

><p>The brothers went home.<p>

"Our scouting mission revealed that Dagur is working on something big," Hiccup said, going up the steps to their shared room. "We'll have to keep a close eye on it so he doesn't take us by surprise."

Toothless warbled to Hiccup.

"What, bud?" Hiccup asked.

Toothless looked at Grim. The dragon speaker was standing at the top of the stairs with his arms crossed. His pale face was twisted into an expression annoyance and disappointment along with something predatory.

"Why are you looking at me like that?" Hiccup asked.

"We could have trained Gustav," said Grim.

"He doesn't have experience," said Hiccup.

"He cannot gain experience if you tell him he cannot be a rider," said Grim.

"But he can't be a rider with no experience," Hiccup argued.

"Then we give him the experience," said Grim. "Gustav does not need to join us on missions to Outcast Island. He can be part of the patrol around the island with Axewing and Grindheart."

Hiccup sighed. "That's true. But I don't have the time and he doesn't

have a dragon."

"I will see if I can find a dragon for him to ride tomorrow," said Grim. "I may have to go to Grim Island to see if I can find a dragon his size to begin riding."

"I don't think this is a good idea," said Hiccup.

"Hiccup, if I choose the dragon he learns to ride, there is a chance they will bond," said Grim. "It may be better than him going out on his own and getting hurt by a wild dragon."

"You're right," said Hiccup. "And can you stop with that look? It's kinda creepy."

A grin had spread across Grim's face when Hiccup relented. It was a cross between victorious and scheming. It only spread wider and twisted into something akin to predatory when he saw Hiccup's reaction to it.

Hiccup flinched away. "Stop it!"

"Are you nervous, little fish?" Grim teased.

"Toothless!" Hiccup got behind the Night Fury.

"\*\*Stop scaring him,\*\*" ordered Toothless. "\*\*What has gotten into you?\*\*"

"\*\*I have a sense of humor,\*\*" Grim defended. "All right, brother, I'll leave you be."

"Oh, before you leave to look for a dragon for Gustav, can you join the meeting for what we're going to do about Dagur?"

"Certainly."

\* \* \*

><p>In the morning, the riders gathered in the Academy. Hiccup had pinned a map of Outcast Island to an obstacle wall. Behind them, Ruffnut and Tuffnut were digging a large hole.<p>

"Okay, we're gonna need a diversion to get a closer look at whatever Dagur's building," said Hiccup.

"The flaming funeral pyre on my flaming pyre ship should do the trick," said Snotlout.

"Hold on, hold on," said Tuffnut, he and Ruffnut looking out of the hole. "I thought we were burying you two alive. Pfft! Fine, I'll start gathering wood."

"Yeah, and I'll start gathering pyres," Ruffnut added, irritated.

A loud roar sounded outside of the Academy. They all turned to the entrance where a purple and gold Nightmare swooped and landed hard, throwing something off its neck.

Gustav jumped up and put his hands on his hips. "I, uh, meant to do

that," he said.

The Nightmare began sniffing around the Academy.

"Is it me or did a tiny little Snotlout and Hookfang just fly in?" Tuffnut asked.

The Nightmare nudged the twins hard and they fell back into the hole and continued exploring.

"\*\*What are you doing in here?\*\*" Toothless demanded loudly.

Hiccup overcame his shock. "Gustav, what are you doing here?"

"Well, you said you didn't have time to train me, so I found my own dragon and trained myself," Gustav said proudly.

"Gustav, I'm not so sure we have the same definition of trained," Hiccup said.

"Look how he defies authority," Snotlout said proudly. "Hmph! I taught him well. Now I can go in peace."

"Quit getting my hopes up," Astrid said.

"Fellow dragon riders, I like you all to meet my dragon, Fanghook," Gustav said.

The Nightmare continued to sniff around and came over to Hookfang and Toothless. "\*\*Hey.\*\*"

"\*\*How dare you trespass? Get out!\*\*" roared Hookfang.

"Fanghook?" Snotlout questioned. "Are you serious? Don't you have any respect for authority?"

Hiccup walked over to Gustav. "Gustav, we told you there's more to being a dragon rider than just riding a dragon. You have to form a bond, a friendship."

"We have it," said Gustav. "Test us. I'll prove it!" He ran over to Fanghook.

The twins' arms were the only part visible as they fist-pumped.

"Test him! Test him! Test him, test him, test him, test him!" Tuffnut cheered.

Gustav grabbed hold of Fanghook's leg and the dragon moved away.

Fishlegs moved over to Hiccup. "You know, it might not be the worst idea."

"No, I'm pretty sure it is the worst idea," said Hiccup.

"Think about it," Fishlegs told him. "Look at Snotlout. Maybe he needs to see how easily he can be replaced."

Fanghook let Gustav stand on the thumb of his wing and lifted him up so the little boy could jump onto his neck.

"Enough said. I'm in," said Astrid.

"This could work," Grim said. "Fanghook is being gentle with him and doing what he is instructed. A bond is forming."

"You know what, Gustav, you're absolutely right," Hiccup said, walking out to meet Snotlout, Fanghook, and Gustav, who was hanging off the dragon's neck.

"Whoa, whoa, whoa! He is?" Snotlout asked.

"Yes, he is," said Hiccup.

Toothless walked over and fired a plasma blast at Hiccup's feet.

Hiccup drew an X in the ash with his foot. "Let's see you do a lap around the arena and land on this mark."

"All right, Fanghook, fire it up!" Gustav said.

The dragon took up his starting place.

"Quite the stirring battle cry," Fishlegs commented.

"Eh, it's all right," said Snotlout.

"\*\*This is not going to end well,\*\*" Deathshriek said. "\*\*He can barely stay on the dragon's back.\*\*"

"\*\*I had to learn without a saddle. Gustav can do the same thing,\*\*" said Grim.

"\*\*You almost broke your leg when we first began flying,\*\*" Deathshriek reminded.

"\*\*Almost,\*\*" Grim pointed out.

Fanghook took off and flew into the wall next to the entrance. He got back up and overshot landing on the X and flew into the wall on the other side of the arena. Dragon and rider landed in a heap.

Gustav quickly recovered and jumped up. "Dragon rider!"

"Wow, that was pretty good," Hiccup said.

"Pretty good?" snapped Snotlout. "Are you kidding me?"

The twins finally got out of the hole. "Is anyone tired of listening to Snotlout's ghost?"

Snotlout stomped over to them. "Hey, I'm not dead yet."

"You're dead to us," Ruffnut said.

Fanghook got his bearings and raised his head, Gustav holding on to his neck. He shot some fire at Snotlout.

Grim and Hiccup set up a few targets.

"Okay, bud, show them how it's done," said Hiccup.

Toothless shot the targets.

Gustav lifted one of the fallen targets. "Fire it up!"

Fanghook fired. His shot went between the twins, almost hitting Astrid, and would have hit Gustav if he hadn't jumped out of the way.

"\*\*Watch it!\*\*" Toothless snapped at Fanghook.

Grim helped Gustav to his feet.

"Weak sauce," said Snotlout. "You didn't even hit anything."

"That's not quite true," said Hiccup.

A sheep had been hit and was bleating fearfully while sprinting around the arena, a small patch of wool on fire.

"Bravo, you're all set for the next sheep rebellion," Snotlout said sardonically.

"But this time we'll win," Tuffnut said.

"Okay, if you guys are really serious about him replacing me." Snotlout pointed to Gustav.

"We're just following the last wishes of a legendary warrior," Astrid pointed out.

"Besides, no need to replace you." Tuffnut shoved his hand in Snotlout's face. "You're already gone," he chuckled.

Snotlout punched Tuffnut in the stomach and knocked him back into his sister.

"Ow! I really, really thought that was gonna go right through him," said Tuffnut, bent double. "You know, might be able to tickle his back."

"Let's just see how he does on one of our obstacle courses," Snotlout said, getting in Gustav's face.

Gustav gave Snotlout a determined smile. He ran over to get on Fanghook.

"\*\*Wait,\*\*" Grim ordered.

Fanghook turned to Grim in surprise. "\*\*You speak Dragonese.\*\*"

Grim nodded. "\*\*I do. Thank you for being gentle with the boy.\*\*"

"\*\*He's young,\*\*" said Fanghook. "\*\*Even I know that. He's friendly, too.\*\*"



Grim gave another nod. "Gustav, get up on Fanghook. \*\*Fanghook, would you mind if I get on your back?\*\*"

"\*\*Not at all,\*\*" said Fanghook.

Gustav climbed up on Fanghook. Grim got on behind him. "You don't have a saddle. Riding without one is different. You will have to hold on with your legs. Fanghook has horns you can hold onto like Snotlout does with Hookfang. Holding on with only your hands will not keep you on his back if he climbs and dives quickly."

Grim positioned Gustav's hands and legs so the boy could hold onto Fanghook without hurting the dragon and without being hurt himself. Once he finished, Grim, Hiccup, Snotlout, and Gustav flew off to the obstacle course.

Gustav was still having trouble staying on.

Hiccup began giving Gustav instruction. "Okay, on this course, you start at those big pines and you -."

"You blah, blah, blah, blah," Snotlout mocked. "If you're good, kid, you'll keep up with me. Fire it up!"

Hookfang went into a steep dive.

"Hey! You stole my battle cry!" Gustav yelled, directing Fanghook to follow.

"Oh, this is not good," Hiccup said, watching how fast both dragons were going.

Hiccup and Grim stayed back while the two Nightmares raced around the obstacle course. They caught up a few moments later to find Gustav knocked out on the ground.

"Is he okay?" Hiccup cried.

"He's fine," Snotlout replied easily. "Got knocked off and couldn't hold onto the branch."

Grim scooped up Gustav and flew back to the Academy.

\* \* \*

><p>Gustav woke up soaking wet.<p>

"Hey, hey, hey! Don't throw water on him," Ruffnut was saying to Astrid. Astrid was holding a bucket. "Tiny Snotlout will just shrink more. Duh!"

Gustav sputtered and got up. "How'd I do?"

Snotlout walked across the Academy, scratching his behind. "Well, you lasted about two seconds."

"But, hey, those two seconds, awesome," said Hiccup.

"I could not hold onto Deathshriek properly when I started to learn,"

said Grim.

"I gotta admit you're gonna make a great replacement for Snotlout, Gustav," said Astrid.

"Says who?" Snotlout said, still scratching. He stopped and frowned. "Hey, wait a second. You're trying to convince me I'm not dying. What kind of friends are you?" He walked over to Hiccup and started scratching again.

Hiccup stood with his arms crossed. "Look, Snotlout, maybe you have seen the Five Signposts of Valhalla, and maybe you are going to die someday, and maybe you can stop scratching your butt while I'm talking to you."

"Sorry. It's just all this broad grass in my shorts," said Snotlout.

"And your shorts are full of broad grass why?" Hiccup said.

"More importantly, why aren't yours?" Snotlout said. "The twins told me it prevents saddle chafing."

Hiccup and Grim turned to the twins. The twins turned away, wearing false looks of innocence.

"Oh, they did, did they?" said Hiccup. "They also let the sheep in and sheep love broad grass. And I'm guessing you're also the ones who dropped the 'bird of death.'"

"We've no idea what you're talking about," said Ruffnut, she and her twin putting their hands up in defense.

"\*\*Here you go!\*\*" two dragon voices said.

Two chickens fell into the twins' arms. They looked up to see Barf and Belch drop two more. The twins ran away.

"Ah, I get it," said Snotlout, punching his fist into his hand. "So this means. . . I give up. What does this mean?"

"It means the twins were messing with you," said Astrid.

"Right," said Snotlout. "Right. And?"

Hiccup came up beside him and yelled slowly, "You're not dying!"

"I'm alive?" Snotlout said in awe. "I'm alive! Thank you, thank you, thank you, Thor." He kissed his hands and patted his face. "Snotlout is too beautiful to die, anyway."

Astrid scoffed. "And my lunch is in my throat."

"How fortunate," Grim muttered to her. "My appetite is gone."

"So this means I can't be in the Academy?" Gustav asked.

They turned to the boy.

"I just wanted to be a dragon rider so bad," Gustav said.

Snotlout got in his face. "On the one hand, I sympathize with your ruthless devotion to your goal."

"And on the other hand?" Gustav asked.

Snotlout grabbed Gustav by the vest and threw him out of the Academy. Fanghook followed him out. Snotlout then started chasing the twins, set on giving them a pounding.

Stoick passed them as he walked into the arena. "Hiccup, Grim, we need to talk. Trader Johann just got back from Outcast Island. He overheard Dagur say he's getting ready to test fire some new weapon."

"That must be what we saw him building," said Astrid.

"I'll take a couple riders and get a closer look tonight," said Hiccup.

"All right," said Stoick. "But don't engage the enemy. This is a scouting mission, not a battle mission."

\* \* \*

><p>Hiccup chose to take Grim and Snotlout on the scouting mission. In the middle of the night they flew to Outcast Island. Hiccup and Grim were looking at the Berserkers and Outcasts through their spyglasses.<p>

"There are a lot of Berserkers down there," said Hiccup. "What's our diversion?"

"Allow me," Grim said.

Deathshriek took off and flew across the field of view of an Outcast guard. This created a stir and Outcasts and Berserkers started chasing after Grim and Deathshriek.

Grim looked over his shoulder. "\*\*\*Good. They are following.\*\*"

"\*\*Like dragons after a cod,\*\*" Deathshriek added.

Grim chuckled and urged Deathshriek a little faster.

Dagur came running outside. "What is it?" he demanded. "What is going on?"

"A single dragon riders has been sighted heading west," Savage replied.

"Was it the Night Fury?" Dagur asked excitedly.

"No, sir," Savage said. "It was the dragon boy."

"The dragon boy. Oh-ho, good," Dagur smirked.

Hiccup was keeping an eye through is spyglass. "Grim's drawn them far

enough away," he told Snotlout. "Let's get down there and see what Dagur's up to."

Toothless and Hookfang flew down between the bare trees.

"Now!" they heard Dagur yell.

A horn sounded and fiery arrows rained down on them.

"No, it's a trap!" cried Hiccup.

"Yeah!" came a cheer and a large shape flew over their heads.

"Who in the name of Thor is that?" Dagur asked.

"Gustav?" Snotlout said, seeing the large shape was Fanghook.

"Oh, great," Hiccup said flatly.

Gustav climbed back up onto Fanghook's neck after he slipped off.  
"Fanghook, evasive maneuvers!"

Fanghook twisted around the arrows being fired at them. However, he could not do anything about the net launched at them.

"Oh, no!" said Gustav.

They were wrapped up in the net and fell to the ground.

"Save it for Hiccup!" Dagur yelled at the men in charge of the catapult. "I want that Night Fury!"

"Okay, that takes care of the Gustav problem," said Snotlout.  
"Interested in a lamb dinner on the way home?"

"Are you â€" Snotlout! We have to save him!" Hiccup said, Toothless flying to help Gustav and Fanghook.

"Fine," whined Snotlout.

Another net was launched at Hookfang. Toothless destroyed it with a plasma blast. Hookfang continued down and fired at some of the Outcasts.

Toothless twisted around in the air to hover over Gustav and Fanghook.

"Fire it up!" Hiccup said.

"For the last time, that's my battle cry!" Gustav said, pointing at himself.

"I know," Hiccup said. "Now use it."

"Fanghook, fire it up!" Gustav ordered.

Fanghook flamed up and burned through the net, scorching Gustav in the process.

Gustav let out a howl. "Oh, no. Oh, no!" He jumped on Fanghook.

"Let's get out of here!" They flew off.

A metal net caught Toothless and Hiccup.

"Gotcha!" screamed Dagur.

"I'm on my way, Hiccup!" Snotlout shouted. He saw Gustav flying for him. "Come on, Gustav! We're going down there."

"No way! I'm gettin' out of here."

"You're not going anywhere," said Snotlout. "You wanted experience. This is how you get it."

"I don't know, Snotlout," said Gustav. "I don't think I can do this."

"Listen to me, kid. You're flying the Monstrous Nightmare, the most lethal dragon in the known world. You can do it and you will do it."

Gustav looked down at the Outcasts and Berserkers crowding around Hiccup and Toothless.

"You know what," said Gustav. "I will do it."

Dagur stalked over with his sword in hand and a twisted smile on his face. He laughed as he raised his sword above his head.

"Fire it up!"

The two Nightmares swooped down and created a ring of fire around Hiccup and Toothless. Toothless shrugged the net off and got back into the air. He came around to fly next to the Nightmares.

"Toothless, fire," said Hiccup.

The three dragons fired at the catapult. They then turned and flew off. Deathshriek quickly caught up.

"Are you all right?" Grim asked.

"We're okay. Thanks, guys," said Hiccup. "Nice shooting."

"By me," said Snotlout. "His eyes were closed."

"Hey, it was scary," Gustav defended.

\* \* \*

><p>They gathered at the Academy the next morning to report to Stoick.<p>

"So there was no secret weapon being test fired," said Stoick.

"No," said Hiccup. "It was all a trap. Dagur must have intentionally leaked the information to Trader Johann."

"Ah, he is as crafty as he is crazy," said Stoick. "Well, I'm glad

you're all safe." He turned and left.

Gustav was standing by the weapons wheelbarrow. "So, I guess I'm not in the Dragon Academy, huh?" he asked glumly.

Snotlout and Astrid came up behind Hiccup.

"I'll tell you what, Gustav," said Hiccup. "How about we make you our very first junior, apprentice, auxiliary, reserve, backup, replacement rider?"

"In training," Astrid added.

"Fourth class," said Snotlout, putting up only three fingers.

"Yes!" cheered Gustav.

"You realize, however, that means you have to study," said Hiccup.

"Got it!"

"Clean out the dragon stalls," said Fishlegs, shoveling out the dragon droppings.

"Check!"

"And no more unauthorized dragon flying," said Hiccup, looking at Fanghook. "Neither of you are ready."

Fanghook groaned and nudged Gustav.

"I understand," Gustav said quietly.

Snotlout and Hiccup took Gustav out to release Fanghook.

"Go on, Fanghook," Gustav said to the Nightmare once they reached a clearing in the forest. "Be free!"

Fanghook didn't want to go. He nudged Gustav again.

"Go on. I said go already!" Gustav pushed Fanghook away, looking like he was about to cry.

Fanghook walked off into the trees.

Hiccup came up next to Gustav. "I know that was hard," he said putting a hand on his shoulder. "But it was the right thing to do."

"I know," said Gustav.

Hiccup walked back to Toothless.

Snotlout laughed. "And you thought he could replace me?"

"Uh, no one can replace you."

"And don't you forget it," said Snotlout.

"You coming, Gustav?" Hiccup called.

"No, I just want to be alone for a minute," said Gustav.

Hiccup and Snotlout left.

Gustav checked behind him to see if he was alone before whistling. Fanghook came out of hiding.

"Fanghook! So what should we learn today?"

Fanghook replied by picking Gustav up with his mouth. Gustav laughed, Fanghook not hurting him at all in his affection. Fanghook put Gustav down and Gustav flicked his arms to get some of the dragon drool off him, still laughing.

"I knew you wouldn't let Fanghook go so easily."

Gustav and Fanghook both jumped.

"Grim!" gasped Gustav.

Grim and Deathshriek were mere feet away from Gustav and Fanghook. Both wondered how they managed to sneak up on them.

"I. . . I. . ." Gustav tried to say.

"You disobeyed Hiccup's order to let Fanghook go," Grim said sternly. "How are we supposed to rely on you if you don't listen?"

Gustav hung his head.

"\*\*Leave him alone,\*\*" Fanghook growled.

"\*\*Quiet,\*\*" ordered Deathshriek. "\*\*Let Grim teach the boy.\*\*"

Gustav would not admit it out loud, but while he admired and respected Snotlout for being the best role model for a Viking, he feared Grim. The rider was more dragon than human in some ways and Gustav was afraid to get on his bad side. Everyone on Berk could attest to Grim's physical strength after the wrestling match with Dagur that ended with Dagur knocked out after he tried underhand tactics to beat Grim. And Grim had lived on an island of dragons. He could hunt and fight like a dragon and it made him dangerous. And at the moment, Gustav thought he would be eaten by dragon-like teen.

"But there are some orders that need to be disobeyed."

Gustav looked up at Grim.

"You did right, Gustav," Grim said, looking down at him.

"I did?" Gustav asked. "I did! I knew I did the right thing."

"Don't get cocky," Grim said. "Snotlout may abide by it, but it has no place with me. Cockiness will get you killed."

"Yes, sir, Grim," Gustav stuttered.

Fanghook looked at Deathshriek.

"\*\*Grim had to learn all of this on his own,\*\*" Deathshriek said. "\*\*Cockiness almost did get him killed at one point. He may not be the best teacher, but he knows things about dragons the riders may not.\*\*"

Grim turned to Fanghook. "\*\*I know you will take good care of the boy. You will need to keep him safe.\*\* Learning by trial and error is a risky way to learn, but it can be done." He turned and hopped up on Deathshriek.

"You're going to tell Hiccup about this, aren't you?" Gustav said.

Grim smirked. "Tell him what?"

Deathshriek flew off.

\* \* \*

><p><strong>I wanted to show that Gustav was intimidated by Grim since he only knows about him from what he observes and the things he hears about him. Gustav and Grim never really had any interaction. As for Gustav and Fanghook, we all know that the writers could have done more with those two in future episodes. They have secret training now and I hope I can use that in future plots.<strong>

### 13. Chapter 13

\*\*This is just a short chapter, but I wanted to do it. I'll probably post another chapter in a few hours.\*\*

\* \* \*

><p>Deathshriek and Axewing flew over the ocean south of Dragon Island. They were on Screaming Death patrol. Hiccup had taken Fishlegs and the twins in the direction of Changewing Island and Astrid had gone with Snotlout to Dragon Island. Grim had decided to take Axewing with them in case there was any trouble.<p>

"\*\*Are you okay, Grim?\*\*" Axewing asked as they flew across what was now open water.

Grim adjusted his new weapon on his hip. It was a whip he made from dark blue and black dragon scales. He had taken inspiration from Grindheart and Thornado's tails. It was a weapon that was less than likely to kill someone unless a great amount of effort was used. Its weight was still foreign to Grim and he kept adjusting it to remind himself he had a new weapon.

"\*\*Let him be,\*\*" Deathshriek said softly. "\*\*He mourns for the dragons' loss.\*\*"

"\*\*If it hurts his heart so much, why did we come this way?\*\*"

"\*\*Because someone needs to see how the dragons are adapting and I am the only one here that speaks Dragonese and human speech,\*\*" Grim



replied, a bitter edge in his voice to hide his sorrow.

"\*\*Crescent Island is one of the few islands the Screaming Death did not sink,\*\*" Deathshriek said. "\*\*Dragon Island is where most of the dragons went after their islands sunk, but dragons from Tall Tree Island and a few from Sunstone Island moved to Crescent Island.\*\*"

They arrived at Crescent Island where they split up to check on the dragons. Many of them were doing well, finding food and places to build nests when nesting season came around. It was mostly inhabited by Gronkles and Nadders.

Deathshriek found Grim talking to a rose colored Nadder. On her side was a deep scar where scales would never cover again.

"\*\*She lost home and her mate,\*\*" Grim said, a few tears in his eyes. "\*\*The Screaming Death trapped him and he drowned when the island sank. A rock cut her open when it fell.\*\*"

Axewing landed, rearing up like a snake to see everything around him. He saw the dragon speaker's face.

"\*\*Come away, Grim,\*\*" Deathshriek said, giving Grim a nudge. "\*\*You cannot carry all their burdens.\*\*"

Axewing brought his head down to Grim's level. "\*\*Be happy more didn't perish.\*\*"

Grim nodded. He swung himself onto Deathshriek's back. "\*\*Let's find the others.\*\*"

They flew back to Dragon Island, but found no one there.

"\*\*I thought we were all meeting here,\*\*" said Grim.

"\*\*Perhaps they were held up,\*\*" said Deathshriek.

Grim shook his head. "\*\*Astrid and Snotlout should at least be here. I don't hear Astrid yelling at Snotlout. Hiccup and his group went to Changewing Island. You remember what happened the last time we went to Changewing Island, don't you?\*"

"\*\*We better find them,\*\*" said Deathshriek.

The small group flew to Changewing Island.

"\*\*Is that a Scauldron?\*" Grim asked, seeing a large grey dragon with a wing pinned beneath some rocks. The other riders and their dragons were driving off a bunch of Changewings. "\*\*Deathshriek!\*"

Deathshriek and Axewing fired at the Changewings, driving them farther away from the dragons and riders.

Deathshriek landed and Grim jumped off.

"What is going on?" Grim asked.

"Basically, Scauldy's pinned, Ruffnut's the only one who can get

close to him, and we need to get him back to the water before he dries out completely, oh, and we have Changewings attacking," Hiccup explained.

"Let me see what I can do," Grim said, stepping forward.

Scauldy growled. "\*\*\*Stay away!\*\*\*"

"\*\*We are only trying to help you,\*\*" Grim told him in rough Scauldron dialect. "\*\*\*You need to stay calm and still while we free your wing. Let us help you.\*\*"

Scauldy put his head down.

"Ruffnut, stay with Scauldy," said Grim. "He's going to let us help him. The rest of you are going to move these boulders off his wing."

The dragons began removing the rocks off Scauldy's wing one at a time while Ruffnut kept him distracted by singing.

Stormfly lifted the last boulder off.

Scauldy found his wing free and lifted it. He let out a roar of pain that knocked Ruffnut off her feet.

"Oh, no!" Fishlegs cried.

Grim stepped in for Ruffnut and started singing the first thing he could think of. "Dã°lamã;n na binne bui, dã°lamã;n Gaeleah. Dã°lamã;n na farraige, b'fhearr a bhi in Eirrin. Dã°lamã;n na binne bui, dã°lamã;n Gaeleah. Dã°lamã;n na farraige, b'fhearr a bhi in Eirrin."

"Oh, I see it, too," said Hiccup. He had Toothless land next to Scauldy's wing so he could examine it. "The wing is broken. Scauldy can't swim or fly."

"So wait, we did all this for nothing?" Ruffnut asked. She hugged Scauldy and he lifted her up in the air.

Meatlug hovered over the wing.

"It looks like a simple break," Fishlegs observed. "We might be able to fix it."

"With what?" Snotlout asked. "A giant dragon splint?" He cackled.

"Exactly," Hiccup said.

Snotlout was surprised. "I knew that. That's why I said it, 'cause it's my idea."

Astrid scoffed.

"Any time now!" Ruffnut cried. Scauldy's head was laying on her stomach.

Fishlegs took the lead. "Okay, we need wood, the biggest pieces you

can find."

"And we'll need something to secure the splints," said Astrid. Stormfly took off to start searching.

"We can use the rope from my shield, but we'll need more," said Hiccup. "So bring any vines you can find."

"Got it," said Fishlegs.

Hiccup turned to Ruffnut. "Ruffnut."

"I know, I'm stuck on stupid dragon sitting duty," she griped. "I didn't really mean that," she told Scauldy.

"Hey," said Tuffnut. "What am I supposed to do?"

Hiccup tossed his shield to Tuffnut. "Start pulling out all the rope from the grappling hook and bolas. But be very careful -."

Tuffnut was hit in the face with the shield's catapult.

"Of the catapult," Hiccup finished.

\* \* \*

><p>A little while later they had a large log the length of Scauldy's wing lined up.<p>

"Good job, everyone," said Hiccup.

"Here you go." Tuffnut brought Hiccup back his shield.

"Sorry about the catapult thing," Hiccup apologized.

"Ah, it's okay," said Tuffnut. "It's sort of a hair trigger. I tightened it up for you, so -." Tuffnut bumped the release and was hit in the face. He held it up to Hiccup. "Just take it."

Hiccup slipped the shield on his arm. "Okay, someone look out for Changewings while the rest of us work on the splint."

"Astrid and I will go," said Snotlout. He grabbed her around the shoulders. "Alone, by ourselves."

"Knock yourself out," Hiccup said, barely sparing them a glance as he measured out a vine.

Snotlout patted Astrid on the shoulder and gave a half-hug. "What? I know what you were thinking."

Astrid grabbed his arm and flipped him to the ground. She walked off.

"I'm coming," Snotlout said. "Okay, I'm coming."

The remaining riders lined up the two logs that would the splints for Scauldy's wing.

Fishlegs picked up the vine he was holding. "Hiccup, I don't know if

we have enough vines and rope."

"Well, this will have to be enough," said Hiccup, tying a vine to his log.

Ruffnut continued singing while they worked. They got the splint in place.

"Hurry up, guys, and fix that wing, because I've run out of things to sing. Hello!" she said.

Fishlegs tied the vines at one end of the splint off. "I think it's gonna work!"

"Coming in hot!"

"Oh, this can't be good news," said Hiccup.

Hookfang came in for a landing.

"I don't understand women," Snotlout said, looking very confused.

Stormfly came in behind him.

"Changewings behind us," said Astrid. "About five minutes out."

"How many?" Hiccup asked.

"Enough that they aren't bothering camouflaging themselves," Astrid answered.

Hiccup turned around. "Fishlegs!"

"I got it!" he said. The knot he just put in the vine snapped. "Oh, it broke!"

"Oh, no," said Ruffnut.

Fishlegs tried to pull the ends together. "It won't reach! We need more rope!"

They looked up to see the Changewings coming.

"We're out of time!" Fishlegs cried, climbing up on Meatlug. "They're coming! They're coming!"

"Ruffnut, we have to go," said Hiccup.

"No! Can't we all lift Scauldy?" she asked.

"Even if we could, it wouldn't do any good," said Hiccup. "The dragon can't swim."

Ruffnut put her head to Scauldy's.

"Ruffnut," Hiccup urged.

"No! I am not leaving him here," she said.

"Look, sis," said Tuffnut.

Scauldy's eyes narrowed. They could hear the Changewings coming.

"Whatever we're going to do, we have to do it now," said Astrid.

Scauldy pulled his head back from Ruffnut. He nudged her with his nose. "\*\*\*Go.\*\*\*"

Ruffnut looked around for something she could do. She tugged at her hair. "There has to be something."

Grim whirled around to see if the Changewings were close enough to attack. He felt something bump against his hip. He looked down and saw the whip that blended in with his clothes. He had forgotten about it. "I have an idea!" he said. He pulled the whip from his hip. "Who has a dagger?"

When the Changewings arrived, they found the dragons gone, only a dagger on the ground to show that anyone was ever there.

\* \* \*

><p>The riders flew over the water with Scauldy swimming below.<p>

Ruffnut smiled as she looked down and saw the cut up dragon scale whip wrapped to hold the splint in place.

Hiccup looked over at Astrid. "Sorry for sticking you with Snotlout today."

"It wasn't that bad," Astrid said. "Watch this. Hey, sweetie pie! Honey bunch! Snotty-kins!"

"Would you stop it already?" Snotlout asked, clearly disturbed. "You are grossing me out."

"Yeah, you're kinda grossing me out, too," said Hiccup.

Deathshriek flew up to Ruffnut's side.

"You did well, Ruffnut," Grim told her.

"You really did," Fishlegs chimed in. "That was awesome!"

"You know what would have been more awesome?" Tuffnut asked.

Ruffnut punched him in the face. "Yeah, if it would have eaten me?"

"I love it when you read my mind, sis," Tuffnut said.

They head-butted.

"You guys ready to head home?" Hiccup asked.

"Hang on a minute!" Ruffnut said. She steered Barf down, Belch

following. She leaned down and put her hand out to the water. Scauldy popped his head out and she petted his nose. "I gonna miss you, Scauldy. Look, anytime you wanna visit, I'll just kick out Tuffnut to make room. No problem, okay?"

"\*\*Good-bye!\*\*" Scauldy said. He dove beneath the water.

"Bye," Ruffnut said softly.

Scauldy swam away.

"I wish I would have remembered my whip earlier," said Grim.

"Be happy you remembered it at all," said Hiccup. "I don't know what we would have used."

Grim looked over at Ruffnut. "Her hair? Scauldy seemed to like her hair."

"She puts fish oil in it," Hiccup told him.

"Why?" Grim asked.

"You don't want to know," Hiccup said. "What were you singing anyway? Was that -?"

Grim nodded.

They flew home.

\* \* \*

><p><strong>It never made sense to me that Ruffnut cut her hair and it grew back in the next episode. I figured the riders would have to find something else to use for rope and after watching Thornado and Grindheart use their tails as weapons, I thought Grim would come up with something to do the same. As for the song Grim was singing, I was using the version Celtic Woman sang. For those who don't know, Dã°lamã;n is a type of seaweed and when the song is translated into English, it's kind of funny.<strong>

## 14. Chapter 14

\*\*You have been waiting and now is the time. Today I announce what the next installment of the Dragon Trainer, Dragon Speaker series will be crossed over with. Drum roll, please.\*\*

\*\*The next installment of the Dragon Trainer, Dragon Speaker series will be crossed over with. . .Deltora Quest.\*\*

\*\*For those of you who are not familiar with the Deltora Quest series, it is a book series that was geared more towards kids, but adults can like it, too. The author's name is Emily Rodda and the book series includes 15 books, 8 in the Deltora Quest series, 3 in the Deltora Shadowlands series, and 4 in the Dragons of Deltora series. Don't let the number of books put you off, the longest on is only over 200 pages with each book having about a 140 page average. They may be difficult to find since they were released a while ago (I caught onto the series in 6th grade and I'm now out of high school),

but you can probably find it at the library in the children's section. It is a great series that I think doesn't get the credit that it deserves, so I'm crossing it over with the HTTYD series. And I am only using the book series and not that disappointment of an anime they came out with. The story will take place after the book series ends, so you'll have to read all the books to have it make sense.\*\*

\*\*Let me know what you think of this idea in the review section. I'm curious to know how many of you have already read the series.\*\*

\* \* \*

><p>The day they saved Scauldy was the last day of good weather for the next week. All the riders were grounded because of the cold weather. Grim seemed to be the only one not put off by it. Then again he spent most of the week in the forge working on what he would trade with Trader Johann.<p>

Stoick hurried to the fire. "Grim, I have a job for you. Trader Johann is overdue and he won't last another night in this weather."

"Deathshriek and I can ride through this," said Grim.

"Good," said Stoick. "I will get someone from the Academy to go with you."

Grim finished what he was doing and put the fire out. Deathshriek flew him to the Academy to find Hiccup and Toothless coming outside into the wind. They left Berk to search for Trader Johann.

"It's getting pretty dark out here, bud," Hiccup said to Toothless. "Do your thing."

Toothless let out his high pitch cry to see the ocean. He descended, Deathshriek following him. Large chunks of ice laid across the ocean's surface.

"Wow, look at this. I've never seen the ocean frozen solid before," said Hiccup. "No wonder Trader Johann can't get to port. No one could get through this."

They continued on where mist was coming off some of the ice. They heard a chirping sound below and a several forms could be seen through the mist.

"\*\*What is that?\*" Toothless roared.

"I don't know what that was, but I'm glad we're up here and it's down there," said Hiccup.

"Agreed," said Grim.

Toothless let out his cry again. "\*\*There's something!\*"

"Found something?" Hiccup asked. "Let's take a better look."

\* \* \*

><p>They kept searching into the night with only the moon as their only light. Toothless had a few false alarms, but it didn't deter him.<p>

"Wait!" Grim called. "There's something in the ice."

Hiccup turned and saw several large icebergs. In front of them was a ship stuck in the ice.

"There he is!" Hiccup said.

They flew over to see Trader Johann jumping up and down, waving his arms.

"Master Hiccup, Master Grim, you're a welcome sight for these weary eyes," Johann cried.

\* \* \*

><p>They started back to Berk with Trader Johann riding with Hiccup.<p>

"In all my years on the briny deep, I have never witnessed quite like this one," said Johann. "Ice as thick as Thor's hammer. I even considered abandoning my ship and travelling to Berk on foot."

"Well, you won't have to worry about that now, Johann," said Hiccup. "Just enjoy the ride."

"Excellent! We shall pass the time with stories of my grand adventures that are sure to warm your heart and stoke the fires of your imagination."

Hiccup and Toothless exchanged looks.

"\*\*It's going to be a long ride,\*\*" said Toothless.

Grim shook his head. At least they would be entertained.

\* \* \*

><p>They flew back to Berk listening to Trader Johann's stories. Grim was surprised he found some of them of interest.<p>

"But it was not a yak," Johann was finishing his story. "It was his daughter! I could not believe! She looked like a yak and her name was Yakmine. And that, Master Hiccup, was how the king of Enuden made me an honorary member of his royal court."

"Oh, look, we're here," Hiccup said, relieved. "Thank Thor," he muttered.

They landed in the town. It was silent.

"Not the welcome I'm accustomed to, but nonetheless," Johann said.

"Where is everyone?" Hiccup said.



"This reminds me of the time," Johann began.

Grim and Hiccup put their hands up for silence. They could see smoke coming from a chimney.

"Hello? Anyone?" Hiccup called.

"I'll check the Academy," Grim said. He and Deathshriek took off for the Academy.

Hiccup, Toothless, and Trader Johann searched the town.

Toothless found a few apples that had fallen out of their wheelbarrow. Hiccup ran up to the house and found everything in place, except for a tankard by the door. Toothless poked his head in and looked at the tankard.

"\*\*Not good,\*\*" he grunted.

Grim and Deathshriek checked the Academy. There was no one outside. He opened the door and a bunch of Terrors flew out.

"\*\*Wait!\*\*" he called to the Terrors.

One of them turned around.

"\*\*Where is everyone?\*\*" Grim asked.

"\*\*Not here,\*\*" the Terror replied and flew away.

Grim turned to Deathshriek.

"\*\*I have a bad feeling about this,\*\*" said Deathshriek. "\*\*Something doesn't smell right with all this.\*\*"

"\*\*What do you smell?\*\*" Grim asked.

"\*\*Fear, panic, dragon,\*\*" listed Deathshriek.

"\*\*Dragon is not surprising,\*\*" Grim pointed out.

"\*\*Not any dragons I know,\*\*" said Deathshriek. "\*\*There was another dragon here. Maybe more than one. The scents are muddled.\*\*"

"\*\*We better find Hiccup and Trader Johann,\*\*" said Grim. "\*\*These dragons may still be here.\*\*"

"\*\*Agreed.\*\*"

Grim and Deathshriek regrouped with Hiccup, Toothless, and Trader Johann.

"Anything?" Hiccup asked them.

"The whole town, Master Hiccup, it's empty," said Johann.

"It's weird," said Hiccup. "Grim?"

"The Academy was empty except for a few Terrors," Grim replied. "I asked them if they knew anything, but they did not give me a helpful

answer. Deathshriek says he smells something that shouldn't be; a dragon or dragons, the scent is too muddled for him."

Hiccup turned to Toothless. "You, too, bud?"

Toothless nodded. "\*\*\*Yes.\*\*"

Trader Johann stared at Grim. "You speak to dragons, Master Grim?"

Hiccup gasped. "I forgot you didn't know."

"It's not much of a secret anymore," Grim said.

"What else did Deathshriek say?" Hiccup asked.

"He smelled fear and panic," Grim answered.

"What in the name of Thor is going on?" Hiccup asked no one in particular, starting to walk around the town to find any more clues.

"I don't like this one bit," Johann said. "There was one time I was on a trade run with a man who claimed to be a warlock." He kept talking, but Grim noticed Hiccup had stopped.

Hiccup noticed movement in one of the houses whose door was ajar. He jumped up on Toothless. "Let's go, Toothless! Johann, stay with Grim."

Toothless bounded over to the house where Hiccup opened the door. He saw the fire was still burning in the hearth. He walked inside and looked around. Hiccup looked up in time for something large to fall on him.

Hiccup came to with Toothless standing over him. "Toothless?"

"\*\*You okay?\*" Toothless asked.

Toothless' face was quickly replaced by Fishlegs'.

Hiccup jumped. "Whoa! Don't ever do that again."

"Hiccup! Oh, thank Thor!" Fishlegs pulled him into a bone crushing hug. "I'm not so sorry I fell on you."

"Okay, Fishlegs," strained Hiccup. He was then released and he fell to the floor.

Fishlegs began to pace. "Fast. Really fast. Too fast. Speedy, oh, and their sting. Paralyzing sting!"

"Whoa, whoa, whoa," Hiccup said, getting to his feet. "Hold on, Fishlegs. What are you talking about?"

Fishlegs walked up to Hiccup. "Speed Stingers," he said ominously.

"Speed Stingers? Here?" Hiccup asked.

"It all started just after nightfall," said Fishlegs. "They don't fly, but they're fast, faster than any dragon I've ever seen. They hide in the shadows. Scavengers, looking for any they can find. One drop of their venom can paralyze a human or a dragon in an instant. They move in a pack following the leader. He directs them like a war chief. By the time Stoick ordered everybody to the cove, the entire village had been overrun."

"Well, where are the Speed Stingers now?" Hiccup asked.

Fishlegs tried to keep himself from having a panic attack. "I don't know. The sun came up and they disappeared." He went over to the fire to warm up. "But they'll be back. They come out at night."

"I don't understand," said Hiccup. "Why did you come back here, Fishlegs? Why not just stay with everyone at the cove?"

Fishlegs took him outside and looked up on the house roof. Meatlug stood on the roof, completely paralyzed with one leg up and her mouth open.

"Just looked at her up there," said Fishlegs. "So majestic."

"How did I miss that?" Hiccup asked.

"She tried to draw them away so I could escape," Fishlegs told him. "I just couldn't leave her."

Trader Johann, Grim, and Deathshriek walked over and looked up.

"How did we miss that?" Johann asked.

Fishlegs and Trader Johann went up on the roof to move Meatlug.

"So she eats rocks, you say," said Johann, pushing from behind. "That makes sense."

Meatlug farted.

"Oh, oh, dear," Johann said. "That's quite an effect." He fell off the roof.

"Movement!" cheered Fishlegs. "This is very good. It means the paralysis is only temporary. Come up and help, Hiccup."

Hiccup and Toothless climbed up on the roof.

"Uh, where's Johann?" Hiccup asked.

"I'm okay, boys," Johann called up from the wheelbarrow he fell in. "I actually landed on my fluffy bits."

"Fishlegs, what's the deal with this paralysis?" Hiccup asked, pulling back Meatlug's eyelid. "How long does it last?"

"I don't know, Hiccup," Fishlegs replied. "There's nothing about it in the Book of Dragon's or in Bork's papers." He looked out at the ocean. "How do you think the Speed Stingers got here? They can't fly."

"If I had to guess, I would say it was because the ocean is frozen solid, creating an ice bridge from island to ours," Hiccup said. "We need to get to the cove right away."

They shoved Meatlug over the side. Trader Johann was climbing out of the wheelbarrow, but wasn't quick enough. Meatlug landed on him.

"I'm all right," Johann said, his voice muffled.

\* \* \*

><p>They hooked Toothless and Deathshriek up to the wheelbarrow and pulled Meatlug to the cove.<p>

"Grim, have you heard anything about Speed Stingers?" Hiccup asked.

"Only what I heard in passing with dragons who taught me and read in the Book of Dragons," said Grim. "They have the same pack mentality as Smothering Smokebreaths. They aren't as small as Smokebreaths, but have no wings and staying in large groups is a way to defend themselves."

They reached the cove. Hiccup, Grim, Toothless, and Deathshriek climbed down. People were standing around like statues. On one of the rocks stood Stoick, his sword raised high.

"Dad," Hiccup said quietly.

"\*\*I tried,\*\*" came a soft, deep dragon voice. Thornado was lying at the base of the rock. "\*\*I really did. I'm sorry.\*\*"

"He gave as good as he got, Hiccup," Gobber said, coming over to them. "It took six of those Speed Stingers to freeze the poor bugger."

Stoick grunted.

"You betcha, chief," said Stoick.

"What did he say?" Hiccup asked.

Gobber lowered his voice. "No clue. Don't want to make him to feel worse than he does."

"We should have been here," Hiccup said. "We could have helped."

"Nonsense, boy," Gobber said. "There were too many of them. Nothing would have mattered. Tell you one thing, those Stingers would be dining on smoked sturgeon and yak jerky tonight if weren't for your father."

Stoick grunted something else.

"Couldn't agree with you more, Stoick," said Gobber. He turned to Hiccup and shrugged.

"Hiccup!" Astrid ran over and threw her arms around him.

"Oh, Astrid," he said. "How's everyone else?"

"We're fine," she replied. She crossed her arms. "Well, except for -." She motioned across the cove.

The twins were having a field day with a paralyzed Snotlout, making him do embarrassing and painful things.

"Actually, when you think about it's really not so bad," Astrid said.

The twins did something to Snotlout that ended with a resounding clang. Hiccup and Astrid flinched.

\* \* \*

><p>Hiccup sat in front of his father and drew a Speed Stinger in the dirt.<p>

Astrid walked over. "It's gonna be dark soon. The Speed Stingers will be back for the rest of the food. Everyone wants to know what we're gonna do."

Hiccup looked up at his father. He turned back to her. "Gather the other dragon riders. We're heading out." He dusted away the Speed Stinger drawing.

Astrid gathered Grim, Fishlegs, and the twins. "Okay, we're ready."

"Guys, these dragons only come out at night," Hiccup told them. "So we need to find where they sleep during the day. The only problem is we need to find their nest before sundown or. . ."

"Can we not think about the or, please?" Astrid asked.

"Yeah, they came out of nowhere like a pack of wild badgers, scavenging and â€" and -," Fishlegs stuttered.

"And badgeging," Tuffnut finished.

They stared at him.

"What? It's what a badger does," said Tuffnut. "It badges."

Ruffnut smiled and nodded.

"Well, thanks for that," said Hiccup. "Uh, let's go."

"Hold up! You're not going on a Stinger hunt without me."

They turned to Snotlout. He was propped up against the wall of the cove and managed to push himself onto his feet. He was still stiff as a board.

Tuffnut made a disgusted face. "Whoa. That is seriously creepy."

"His paralysis is wearing off," Fishlegs said. He dropped his voice

and added a great amount of sarcasm. "Lucky us."

"Snotlout, unless you plan on flying Hookfang with your teeth, you're not going anywhere," said Astrid.

The rest of them got ready to head out.

"What do you mean? I'm fine," insisted Snotlout.

The others got their weapons.

"Snotlout Jorgenson reporting for duty." Snotlout was up and saluting.

Astrid frowned. "What the?"

Hiccup bent down and saw a small figure behind Snotlout.

Gustav peered around Snotlout. "I'm Snotlout's arms and legs, Hiccup. And together we are -."

"Guslout!" Snotlout and Gustav said in unison, Gustav making Snotlout do jazz hands.

"Stop the hands," Snotlout said to Gustav. "Hiccup, you need as much dragon power as you can get."

"I can't believe I'm actually about to say this, but he's right," said Astrid.

"You're kidding, right?" Hiccup asked her.

"You heard what Gobber said," Astrid said. "There are hundreds of them."

"Oh, all right," said Hiccup. "Fine. We'll split up and search Berk for possible Speed Stinger hiding spots."

"Okey-dokey, Hiccup." Gustav began to struggle to get Snotlout to Hookfang.

Hiccup turned to Fishlegs. "Fishlegs, how's Meatlug?"

"She's raring to go, Hiccup," replied Fishlegs. "Look at her!"

Meatlug tried to fly, only her front legs barely being able to work and her hind legs still paralyzed. She was dragging herself across the ground and crashed into a rock.

"So what's the actual plan?" asked Astrid.

"Fishlegs, you said they follow their leader in a giant pack, right?" Hiccup asked.

"Exactly. That's what I saw," answered Fishlegs.

"So the plan is find the Speed Stingers, capture their leader, use it to lure them away," Hiccup said.

\* \* \*

><p>The riders split up to check the caves. Grim went to check the caves Grindheart tended to occupy. Deathshriek easily flew through the opening, controlling a small fire in his mouth so they had a little light to fly by. It only lit up the cave as much as a lantern would, but they could see enough to keep from flying into something.<p>

"\*\*Grindheart!\*\*" Grim called.

There was no answer.

"\*\*Grindheart!\*\*" Grim called again.

"\*\*Grim! Deathshriek! Over here!\*\*" the voice was not Grindheart, but Fearcloak. The Creeping Shadow flew into view. His four red eyes looked purple in Deathshriek's firelight.

"\*\*What happened?\*\*" Grim asked Fearcloak.

"\*\*Those Speed Stingers,\*\*" replied Fearcloak. "\*\*They were after the fish Grindheart stashed away to eat for later. They took it all. I couldn't do anything to help him.\*\*"

"\*\*Where's Grindheart now?\*\*" Grim asked.

"\*\*Down here.\*\*" Fearcloak was almost impossible to follow down the tunnels.

Deathshriek landed and Grim jumped off.

"\*\*Oh, Grindheart,\*\*" Grim murmured.

Grindheart was aware of what was going on around him, but he was still paralyzed. A few of his spines moved and one row of teeth in his open mouth tried to rotate.

"\*\*I don't know what to do,\*\*" said Fearcloak. "\*\*I didn't want to leave him.\*\*"

"\*\*You did well, Fearcloak,\*\*" Deathshriek said.

Grim ran his hand across Grindheart's head. "\*\*Move what you can, Grindheart.\*\*"

Several spines stood up on end.

"\*\*Good, good,\*\*" said Grim. "\*\*The paralysis is only temporary. Meatlug was stung last night, too, and she's getting some movement back already. She was flying, but not very well. Fearcloak, stay with Grindheart. Do you know where the Speed Stingers went after the raid?\*\*"

"\*\*No,\*\*" Fearcloak replied.

\* \* \*

><p>Grim and Deathshriek rendezvoused with the other riders in the middle of town.<p>

"So, anything?" asked Hiccup.

"Not a single Stinger," Astrid reported.

"Us neither," Fishlegs replied miserably.

"I got stung," Tuffnut said.

"No, you didn't," said Ruffnut.

"Grindheart was attacked in one of his tunnels. Fearcloak is with him. The paralysis is already wearing off. He is not going to be happy when it wears off completely."

"Have we checked every cave?" Hiccup asked. He looked over at Snotlout. He was trying to look innocent. Hiccup wasn't believing it. "Snotlout, did you check your caves?"

Snotlout scoffed. "Please! I'm insulted, Hiccup. Of course I did. Do you think I fell off my dragon and spent hours trying to get out of the sand? Ha-ha! I didn't."

"He fell off his dragon and we spent hours trying to dig him out of the sand," Gustav said from behind Snotlout.

"Gustav, make me punch you!" Snotlout barked.

Instead, Gustav made Snotlout hit himself.

The twins cackled. "Never gets old," said Tuffnut.

"Well then," said Hiccup. "We know where to look. Let's go!"

They flew to the cave Snotlout and Gustav were supposed to check. Astrid and Stormfly got a cage to capture the lead Speed Stinger in.

Hiccup slid off of Toothless and took his shield off his back. "Thanks, Gustav. You stay here with Snotlout and Hookfang."

"Right," said Snotlout. He gave a thumb's-up. "Hey! I did that all by myself."

Belch leaned over with Tuffnut on top. Tuffnut reached over and pushed Snotlout's hand back into his face, effectively making Snotlout shove his thumb up his nose.

"Okay, gang," said Hiccup. "We have to move fast because it will be sundown soon and we need get that lead Stinger out of there. Without him, the pack is useless."

Hiccup, Toothless, Fishlegs, and Grim quietly entered the cave. The Speed Stingers were sleeping on the ground or hanging from the ceiling.

"Hiccup, there he is." Fishlegs pointed to a dragon hanging from the ceiling. He was different from the other Speed Stingers with his red markings and large red crest.



Hiccup fired a bola from his shield. It wrapped around the Speed Stinger. "Got him."

Toothless bounded forward and pulled the Speed Stinger from his perch. "\*\*\*Got him. Now what?\*\*\*"

Hiccup gave a tiny nod.

The sun was setting quickly. The three riders and Toothless began pulling the Speed Stinger out. The dragon made a grumbling sound, but continued to snore. They kept pulling.

Fishlegs turned around. "Um, guys?"

Hiccup and Grim turned around. The Speed Stingers were awake.

"Get the Stinger into the cage right away," said Hiccup, continuing to pull.

The Speed Stinger snapped the rope and tried to sting Hiccup. Toothless fired a plasma blast at his feet and the Speed Stinger dodged. The Speed Stinger turned back to the cave.

"\*\*Attack!\*\*" he roared.

The other Speed Stingers advanced to the cave's entrance. A blast of fire blocked the Speed Stingers. Hiccup and Grim turned around to see Hookfang carrying Snotlout and Gusav. They had swapped places so Gustav was sitting in front.

"That's right!" yelled Snotlout, punching the air repeatedly. "Snotlout! Snotlout! Oy, oy, oy!"

The Speed Stinger jumped up and stung Snotlout in the behind. Snotlout was paralyzed with his fists in the air.

"Aw, come on!" he said through gritted teeth.

Toothless and the Speed Stinger began circling each other.

"He's too fast, Hiccup!" Fishlegs yelled.

"Not for a Night Fury!" Hiccup said.

The Speed Stinger roared a challenge and flipped over to sting Toothless. Toothless retreated quickly and fired a plasma blast. The Speed Stinger flipped back out of the way.

Hiccup peered over his shield. The Speed Stinger went after him, striking the shield with his tail and tossing it away. Toothless caught it in midair and threw it back to Hiccup.

"Thanks, bud," said Hiccup.

Toothless and the Speed Stinger chased each other around. Meanwhile the fire Hookfang had started was going out. Some of the other Speed Stingers were trying to get out.

The lead Speed Stinger roared, "\*\*\*Get them!\*\*\*"

The Speed Stingers jumped over the fire and rallied next to their leader.

Hiccup ran back to Toothless and got on his back. "Astrid, follow us!"

The riders got themselves into the air.

"I think I know where you're going with this!" Astrid called back.

Toothless and Stormfly fired at the Speed Stinger, forcing it back.

"Stormfly, time to spike this Stinger," said Astrid.

Stormfly fired several spines and Toothless fired one more plasma blast. The Speed Stinger was back into the cage and the door was shut and locked.

"Yes!" cheered Hiccup. "Got him!"

The riders landed to protect the cage.

The other Speed Stingers were lost without their leader's orders.

"Hiccup, there's too many," Grim said. "We are surrounded."

A powerful roar blew the Speed Stingers away. Thornado flew in with Stoick on his back.

"Dad, you're okay," said Hiccup.

Stoick got off Thornado's back and walked around to the cage. "Well, you didn't think I would let you have all the fun, did you?" He bent down to be eye level with the caged Speed Stinger. "Remember me?"

"\*\*Let me out!\*\*" the Speed Stinger demanded.

"Now get him off my island," Stoick growled.

"You heard the chief," Hiccup called to the other riders.

"With pleasure," said Astrid.

Stormfly picked up the cage and flew low enough for the other Speed Stingers to follow. From behind Stormfly, Toothless and Deathshriek fired at the Speed Stingers to keep them off Stormfly's tail.

They reached the frozen ocean around the island. One Speed Stinger got through their defence and stung Stormfly. She dropped the cage and she and Astrid landed had on the ice.

"We'll get the cage," Hiccup said. "Grim, Ruff, Tuff, cover Astrid."

Toothless picked up the cage.

"Incoming!" Tuff yelled.

"Here we go!" Ruffnut yelled.

Barf and Belch and Deathshriek created a ring of fire around Astrid and Stormfly. The Speed Stingers raced after their leader, not paying any attention to Astrid and Stormfly.

Hiccup and Toothless were attacked by the Speed Stingers. One stung Hiccup's metal leg. Hiccup hit it with his shield.

"Weren't expecting the old metal leg, were you?" Hiccup said. "There! The ice bridge!"

Toothless began to fly over the ice bridge.

The Speed Stingers caught up again and one cut Toothless' prosthetic tailfin.

"Toothless, we're going down!" Hiccup warned.

Toothless dropped the cage, which broke open on one side of the ice bridge. Toothless and Hiccup landed on the other side of the ice bridge. The lead Speed Stinger called to the others.

Hiccup flipped the switch to open the center of the shield. It opened up, but nothing shot out. "No, no, no! Out of bolas. Toothless!"

"\*\*Right!\*\*" Toothless tried to fire a plasma blast, but couldn't get a spark.

"And no plasma blasts. Great."

The Speed Stingers prepared to strike.

"Ready, Toothless!"

"Hookfang, fire!"

Hiccup and Toothless looked up to see Hookfang, Barf and Belch, Meatlug, and Deathshriek hovering above them.

Hookfang fired and melted the ice between Hiccup and Toothless and the Speed Stingers. The Speed Stingers decided to give it up and ran across the bridge back out to the frozen ocean.

Hiccup looked up. "Nice shooting, Snotlout!"

Hookfang landed.

"Ha, no problem, Hiccup," said Snotlout. He fell off Hookfang to show Gustav was riding behind Snotlout. He crossed his arms and smirked.

"Yeah, no problem, Hiccup," said Gustav.

Hookfang took off again.

Snotlout was caught in the saddle. "Hey, put me down! Repercussions!"

Repercussions!"

\* \* \*

><p>The next day, the villagers began cleaning up the mess the Speed Stingers left. Hiccup and Grim flew Trader Johann out to his ship. The ship had come free of the ice sometime in the morning hours.<p>

"Thank you again for the rescue, Master Hiccup, Master Grim," said Johann.

"No problem, Johann," said Hiccup. "I'm just glad everything's back to normal."

"Oh, before you go, I have something for you," said Johann. He went through some things he had set up on deck. He pulled out a bottle. "A little token of my appreciation. Pure squid ink, wrestled from the colossal squid of the northern waters."

"Wow, thanks, Johann," Hiccup said, taking the bottle.

"Yes, there's actually a wonderful story that goes along with that bottle," said Johann. "Ten summers ago, deep under the -."

Grim smirked and gave Deathshriek a nudge with his foot.

Hiccup had the same idea. "What do you say we get out of here?"

"\*\*I'm with you!\*\*" said Toothless.

Toothless and Deathshriek flew off, leaving Johann calling after them that he hadn't finished his story.

\* \* \*

><p><strong>As always let me know what you think about the chapter and about the Deltora Quest thing. I think it's going to work out great. Just don't expected updates to be happening every couple of days. I don't have half of what I want for that story done and when I started posting for the Dragon Trainer, Dragon Speaker series, I had the majority of it ready to go already.<strong>

## 15. Chapter 15

\*\*I hope you are reading the Deltora series. I only have a few more chapters to post for this story and then it's Deltora time. I'm really excited about this and I hope I can deliver another popular story in the series. Go ahead and review the chapter at the end.\*\*

\* \* \*

><p>A few mornings later, a horn woke the riders. Grim was out of bed before Hiccup registered what the horn was for by a second blast.<p>

"\*\*Deathshriek! Screaming Death attack!\*\*" Grim jumped out the window above Hiccup's bed and down the ground. Deathshriek was waiting for

him. The two of them were in charge of rallying Grindheart and Axewing during a Screaming Death attack.

Grim saw the twins get on Barf and Belch and Snotlout and Astrid both flying for the great hall. He frowned. Hiccup had assigned Astrid the great hall to protect during a Screaming Death attack. Snotlout knew that and he was supposed to protect the armory. Grim knew this was about to turn ugly.

Snotlout threw something in Astrid's face. This startled Stormfly and caused her to shoot some spines from her tail behind her. Astrid yelled at Snotlout, Grim being too far away to discern it and then both dragons got into a fight and tumbled into the great hall.

Grim turned Deathshriek around and they landed next to Hiccup and Toothless, who had just done a lap around the village to see if they could see the Screaming Death. People in the great hall came running out screaming.

"Oh, great," Hiccup said. "I can see my father's face already."

\* \* \*

><p>Stoick called all the riders to line up.<p>

"When you told me you would be running a Screaming Death attack drill, I assumed you wouldn't actually try to destroy the entire village," Stoick said.

"Technically, chief, it was just the great hall," Fishlegs put in.

Stoick glared at him.

"And I'll let you take it from here," Fishlegs said nervously.

"Dad, this was supposed to be a practice run, but it just got out of hand," said Hiccup.

Astrid and Snotlout glared at each other.

"I'm sorry," Hiccup said.

Gobber decided to speak up from behind Stoick. "Uh, 'sorry' doesn't unburn Silent Sven's chest hair."

"No, it certainly does not," said Stoick. "Which brings me to your punishment. You lot get to clear out Mildew's cabbage field so it's ready for planting at the end of the week. I suggest you get started this afternoon."

The riders turned to get their dragons and go to Mildew's cabbage field. Grim started walking in the other direction.

"Where are you going?" Hiccup asked.

"I will join you shortly," said Grim. "There is something I need to do first."

Grim walked to Gothi's house and knocked on the door. Gothi opened it

and was surprised to see Grim on her doorstep.

"Greetings, wise one," Grim said. "I need your help."

Gothi stepped aside and motioned for Grim to enter with her staff.

"I have come to see if you had any burn cream," Grim explained. "Astrid and Snotlout got into a fight and their dragons got involved. Silent Sven had his chest hair burned off and I am certain there was more than hair burned. I wished to bring him some as a peace offering between the riders and the villagers."

Gothi got a small jar off a shelf and handed it to Grim. Grim opened the jar and sniffed the contents.

"\*\*Water grass,\*\*" he warbled, knowing the clean smell of the plant the dragons rolled in after a bad dragon fight. "I didn't know this worked on humans as well. Thank you, Gothi."

Grim left and went to Silent Sven's farm. He knocked on the door. Silent Sven answered it and glared when he saw it was Grim.

"I am sorry for what happened this morning," said Grim. He held up the jar. "This is for any burns you may have. I know dragon fire burns more than just chest hair."

Silent Sven took the jar and made a few motions with his other hand.

"He says you'll make a good leader," Sven's wife said.

Grim shook his head. "Hiccup will be the next chief, not me."

"But he'll have you to guide him," Sven's wife told him.

Grim gave a small bow and excused himself to get to the cabbage field. Deathshriek and Grim arrived just as Hiccup was assigning work to each rider.

"Astrid, Snotlout, you two break down and clear out the big boulders on the far end, while -."

"Actually, that sounds more like a man's job," Snotlout said proudly, putting his hands on his hips.

"You're right," said Astrid. "Better give me Grim instead."

"Please leave me out of this," Grim muttered.

Snotlout's arrogant expression fell. "Huh? Astrid, what do you see when you look over here?" He flexed his muscles.

"\*\*Ay!\*\*" grumbled Hookfang.

"Is that a serious question?" Astrid asked.

"You see five thousand pounds of boulder crushing splendor," Snotlout said, pulled Hookfang's head over to his.

"\*\*Oh, do shut up,\*\*" growled Hookfang.

"Just don't slow me down, boulder boy," Astrid said, knocking on Snotlout's helmet.

Hookfang snarled. "\*\*\*Yeah, anyway!\*\*\*" He nudged Snotlout hard in the back.

Hiccup and Toothless looked at each other.

They began clearing out the field.

"I should have brought Grindheart up here," said Grim. "We would be able to clear this field quickly."

"Dad said to do this ourselves," said Hiccup. "It's punishment after all."

"True," agreed Grim. "However, if by the end of the week we are not near finish, I will call him up here in the night for him to finish clearing out."

Hiccup and Toothless looked at the riders and their dragons working in the field. "Things are going well."

Grim nodded. He turned to the house. "With Mildew not living there any longer, what will happen to the house?"

"I'm not sure," said Hiccup. "Why?"

"I am simply curious," said Grim.

"I told you to stay out of my way!" Snotlout yelled at Astrid. "This is Viking work!"

"Exactly," said Astrid. "What are you doing?"

Hiccup groaned and face-palmed.

Hookfang fired at Stormfly with no warning. Stormfly fired back.

"That's productive," Hiccup said flatly. "Toothless, plasma blast."

Toothless reared up and fired a plasma blast between the two fighting dragons. He then flew over to keep them separated. Then all three started roaring at each other.

"Hookfang, stop! Heel!"

"Stormfly, calm down!"

Toothless snapped at Stormfly.

"Whoa, bud, come on! We're supposed to break up the fight, not win it!" Hiccup said to Toothless.

"Hookfang, calm down! Hookfang!"

"Stormfly! Stormfly!"

"\*\*Keep away!\*\*" roared Toothless angrily.

Fishlegs and Meatlug hovered nearby, dismayed at the display.

"Guys, back your dragons away from each other!" Hiccup called to Snotlout and Astrid.

"I'm trying!" Snotlout yelled.

"Well, try harder!" Hiccup yelled back. "Okay, everyone to the rock pile!"

Hiccup got Toothless to the rock pile along with Hookfang and Stormfly.

Snotlout jumped off Hookfang. "What is wrong with your dumb dragon?" he roared.

Astrid and Hiccup jumped off their dragons, too.

"Guys," said Hiccup, trying to break up the fight before it got worse.

"My dumb dragon?" repeated Astrid. "Your flaming Snotmare was trying to barbeque us."

"Guys," Hiccup tried again.

"Snotmare? Snotmare?" Snotlout stopped. "I kinda like that!"

"You would," Astrid hissed.

"Guys!" Hiccup yelled.

"Oh, yeah, I would, huh?"

"Yeah, yeah, you would."

"How about I call your dragon ugly?"

"I'll tell you who's ugly!" Astrid put her finger in Snotlout's face.

"That is enough!" roared Grim.

Snotlout and Astrid were startled out of their argument.

"Thank you," Hiccup said to Grim. He turned back to Snotlout and Astrid. "Now, will somebody mind telling me what exactly was going on out there?"

"Simple! Hookfang and me were just trying to do our job when Stormfly went crazy and started shooting at us."

Astrid was shocked by Snotlout's account of what happened. "You have got to be kidding! Hiccup, Stormfly and I were doing our job when this lunatic and his overgrown firepit started torching us."



"Oh, come on!" Snotlout said. "When have we ever started a fight just for the sake of starting a fight?"

The three riders gave him a flat look.

"Let me rephrase that," said Snotlout.

"Never mind," said Hiccup. "Do you two think you can work together, yes or no?"

Snotlout and Astrid glared at each other.

"Good," said Hiccup.

Snotlout and Astrid got on their dragons and flew back to the village.

Fishlegs walked over to the brothers. "Okay, that was weird."

"Snotlout and Astrid trying to tear each other's heads off was weird?" asked Hiccup.

"No, their dragons, Hiccup," said Fishlegs. "As much as Snotlout and Astrid like to torture each other, Stormfly and Hookfang have always stayed out of it."

Hiccup hummed.

\* \* \*

><p>At the Haddock house that night, Hiccup was feeding Toothless a basket of fish and Stoick was sitting in his chair sharpening his axe.<p>

"So, son, how are things going in the field?" Stoick asked Hiccup.

"Oh, Dad, it couldn't be going any better. We're moving like a well-oiled catapult."

"Really?" asked Stoick. "Because word around the paddock is that Astrid and Snotlout trying to turn the catapult on each other. Again."

Hiccup laughed nervously. "Oh, that? That's a minor, uh, disagreement. You know how they are."

There was a pounding knock on the door.

"In fact, I'm sure they've already forgotten about it," Hiccup said, going to answer the door.

"Let's hope," Stoick said, brightly.

Hiccup opened the door to reveal Astrid.

"Hiccup, I refuse to work with Snotlout."

"Uh, Astrid, what a beautiful night. Let's talk outside," Hiccup said

quickly, pushing her back and closing the door behind him.

Stoick looked over at Grim, who was sitting at the table eating a leg of mutton. "It's bad, isn't it?"

Grim nodded.

Hiccup came back inside.

Stoick looked at Hiccup, still sharpening his axe.

"That's, so, that's Academy business. No big deal."

There was another knock on the door.

"Let me grab that," Hiccup said with a smile. He opened the door. This time it was Snotlout.

"Hiccup, I-."

Hiccup pushed Snotlout back. "Oh, look! A full moon!" He closed the door behind him.

"You best let Hiccup tell you what happened," Grim said.

"Yes," said Stoick. "It would be good for him."

Hiccup came back in.

"Problem, son?" Stoick asked innocently.

"P-problem? What problem? No, no, everyone is happy. Everything is great."

"Good to hear," said Stoick.

"Yep, yep," Hiccup said. "Everything is right as rain."

"If you say so," Stoick said.

Hiccup continued to ramble nervously. "I do. I say so."

Stoick continued sharpening his axe, knowing it was only a matter of time before Hiccup cracked. He didn't have to wait for long.

"Oh, fine! You win! Snotlout and Astrid are driving me completely insane. They're acting like mental cases. I actually don't know who's worse, them or their dragons. At least with the dragons you can lock them in their pens until they behave." Hiccup panted.

"Feel better?" Stoick asked.

"A little," Hiccup replied.

Stoick stood up. "All right. Hiccup, there's three ways to deal with Vikings who aren't getting along."

"I'm all ears," said Hiccup.

"Option one: You give them both axes and let them fight to the end,"

Stoick said.

"Now that one seems a tad, uh, permanent," said Hiccup. "What's option two?"

Stoick put his axe down and picked up a mace. "You give them both maces and let them fight to the end." He gave the mace to Hiccup.

"Do I even want to know what option three is?" Hiccup asked.

"Oh, it's quite devious and can have grizzly repercussions," replied Stoick. "Then again, it can go down like a treat. Odds are about fifty-fifty either way."

"I'm listening," said Hiccup.

"You trick them into working together," Stoick told him.

Hiccup came up with an idea.

Grim finished his leg of mutton. "Stoick, what is going to happen to Mildew's house? It is sitting empty at the moment."

"There have been no plans for it," said Stoick. "It will probably be turned into a shed since the field will be planted. Why do you ask, Grim?"

"I am running out of room to put the dragon scales and claws I collect," said Grim.

Stoick hummed. "I guess you can put your things there."

"Thank you, Stoick," said Grim.

\* \* \*

><p>The next day Hiccup had Astrid and Snotlout work on opposite sides of a hill. They heard each other and found they were working together.<p>

"Why that little hiccup!" Snotlout said.

"Option three," Astrid groaned. "I should have seen that coming. Well, Stormfly and I are gonna prove we're not the problem by working with you."

"Pssh! Not as well as we're going to work with you," Snotlout said. "Right, Hookfang?"

Hookfang and Stormfly began working in the same area.

Fishlegs and Hiccup stood a little ways away, watching them.

"I wouldn't believe it if I wasn't seeing it with my own two eyes," said Fishlegs.

"I guess my dad was right," Hiccup said. "Then again I did put own hiccup spin on it. That's what all great leaders do, Fishlegs, they take an idea and then they shape it."

"Uh, Hiccup?" Fishlegs said.

Hookfang and Stormfly began fighting again. Stormfly stuck up all her spines and threw Astrid from her saddle. Hookfang threw off Snotlout and fired at Stormfly.

"Great leaders are also proven wrong," Hiccup said.

The two fighting dragons went at it until something small got between them.

"\*\*ENOUGH!\*\*" Grim shrieked, sounding very much like Deathshriek. The two dragons stopped and looked down at the irate dragon speaker. "\*\*Both of you, back to the Academy now!\*\*"

Stormfly and Hookfang shrank back looking ashamed.

They all returned to the Academy.

"Astrid, Snotlout, your dragons are out of control," said Hiccup. "But I think I know why. This is the day I've always feared would come. Your dragons have picked up on your animosity to each other and now they are behaving in the same way."

"Is it my fault that me and Hookfang are so in sync?" Snotlout asked.

Hookfang smoked Snotlout's back.

Hiccup took Snotlout's arm and led him over to Stormfly and Astrid. "But you have just given me an idea." He then took Astrid's arm and led her over to Hookfang. "You both need to walk a mile in each other's shoes. Or in this case, saddles. Perfect."

"What?" asked Astrid. "What's perfect?"

"You two are gonna swap dragons for the day," Hiccup told them.

"What?"

"\*\*What?\*\*"

"That's right," Hiccup said with a smile.

"It's a girl dragon!" Snotlout yelled.

"\*\*So what?\*\*" Stormfly growled at Snotlout, making him cringe.

"You can learn to understand each other's dragons, then maybe you can learn to understand each other," Hiccup explained.

Hookfang nudged Astrid. She pushed his head away.

"This does not work well with my manliness," Snotlout said.

"You can take the day off and just get to know your new best friend," Hiccup told them.

"Hey," Tuffnut called. "Does that mean if we start fighting that was get the day off, too? Because we will. Watch!"

The twins started fighting.

"See?" Tuffnut said.

The twins continued to fight and Barf and Belch started headbutting.

"Nope. The four of us and Fishlegs are going to head out to the field and keep working," said Hiccup. "My dad wants it done in time for planting."

"I want that day off," Tuffnut strained as he fought with Ruffnut.

While Astrid and Snotlout were getting to know their dragons, the twins, Hiccup, Fishlegs, and Grim were working in the field. Grim decided to see if the house needed work. What he found was a layer of dust on everything Mildew hadn't taken with him. So while the others worked in the field, Grim worked alone in the house.

\* \* \*

><p>At the end of the day, Hiccup and Grim waited for Astrid and Snotlout to come back at the Academy.<p>

"So how was it?" Hiccup asked when they returned.

"Stormfly flies pretty good, for a girl," Snotlout said. "And she does melt solid rock in, like, half a second which is cool."

"She does indeed," Hiccup said. "And Astrid?"

"I guess Hookfang is pretty powerful," said Astrid. "And he's easy to fly which is good if you have a little talent."

"Yeah, and I have a little talent," said Snotlout proudly. He frowned. "Wait."

"Well, it sounds like you both have a better appreciation for each other's dragons," said Hiccup.

"Eh, it's okay," Snotlout said.

"So that means maybe tomorrow you'll cut each other some slack?" Hiccup said.

"Yeah, I guess," said Astrid.

"Fine," said Snotlout. "Can we go now?"

Snotlout walked away.

"\*\*Snotlout,\*\*" said Stormfly.

Snotlout turned around.

"\*\*I had fun,\*\*" said Stormfly.

Astrid followed Snotlout out of the Academy.

"\*\*Fly with me soon, Astrid,\*\*" Hookfang called after her.

Hiccup turned to Toothless. "Baby steps, bud. Baby steps."

\* \* \*

><p>At dawn, Fishlegs and Grim flew Meatlug back to the field. When they landed, Fishlegs picked up a rock and tossed it into Meatlug's mouth.<p>

"Okay, that should you over for a bit," said Fishlegs. "But I need you to focus now. We're looking for clues, anything that will tells us why Hookfang and Stormfly are acting so crazy."

"\*\*Right,\*\*" said Meatlug determinedly.

"Crazy is one way of putting it," said Grim. "The only times I've seen dragons fight like that were during territory disputes."

Fishlegs walked over to where Stormfly was yesterday. "Nadder prints. Excellent. Everything seems to be fine here."

He walked over to where Hookfang had been. "And here's the Nightmare's. Mm-hmm, still peaceful."

They went over to where they had gotten into a fight.

"And here's where the trouble started," said Fishlegs.

Meatlug sniffed.

"But why here?" Fishlegs asked. "Maybe it's something-."

Meatlug pushed Fishlegs aside, smelling something.

"Meatlug, dig," Fishlegs ordered.

Meatlug dug a deep hole.

"Keep going, girl."

Grim gave Meatlug a push back and the two riders looked into the hole.

"I was right," said Fishlegs.

"No wonder they were acting like that," said Grim. He quickly looked over at Meatlug. "\*\*How are you feeling, Meatlug?\*\*"

"\*\*Hungry,\*\*" Meatlug replied.

"We need to tell the others," said Grim.

They both heard two dragon roars.

"We need to tell them now," said Grim.

They both hopped on Meatlug and hurried to find the others.

"You know, if you would brought Deathshriek with you, you could find them faster than I could," Fishlegs said to Grim.

"When you suggested it was what it is, I knew I couldn't bring Deathshriek," said Grim. "We saw what it did to Stormfly and Hookfang and even Toothless for a few moments.

They hurried back to the Academy.

The other riders were at the Academy already and Stormfly and Hookfang were gone.

"Okay, okay," said Hiccup. "They can't be far. We'll split up the island."

"Actually, Hiccup!" Fishlegs called, landing Meatlug. "We might know where they are."

Grim called for Deathshriek and the riders flew back to Mildew's cabbage field. Hookfang and Stormfly were fighting again.

"We need to break this up," said Snotlout from the back of Meatlug.

"Who knows what they'll do to each other," Astrid said from Toothless' back.

"I'm open to ideas," said Hiccup.

"Drop me in," said Astrid.

Toothless swooped down and Astrid jumped off behind Stormfly.

"Me, too," said Snotlout to Fishlegs.

Snotlout was dropped off behind Hookfang.

The other dragons circled the fight from above.

"Fishlegs, how did you know they were going to be here?" asked Hiccup.

"The more I thought about it, the more I wondered what made this situation different from any other," replied Fishlegs. "It was the field."

"We've been in a lot of fields," said Hiccup.

"No, no, no," said Fishlegs. "Not like this one."

Hiccup looked down and saw Hookfang and Stormfly were fighting over something. In a hole was a green plant.

"Dragon root," said Hiccup.

"Not dragon root," Tuffnut said dramatically. "That is terrible!"

"You don't actually know what dragon root is, do you?" said Hiccup.

"Not even slightly," said Tuffnut. "Not even the faintest. I think I know what 'dragon' means."

"Dragon root is like dragon nip, only more powerful," said Fishlegs.

"But instead of calming a dragon, it makes them aggressive," said Grim. "What is worse, is that they crave it. I've heard stories from other dragons about dragons finding dragon root and fighting over it to the point where one or all the dragons involved die."

"Cool," said Ruffnut.

"That's good," said Tuffnut. "Do they make it for people?"

"Well, we can't leave Astrid and Snotlout down there," said Hiccup. "We have to help."

Astrid came up behind Stormfly. "Stormfly, calm down! It's me! Everything's okay!" Astrid had to duck to keep from getting hit in the head by her dragon's spiked tail.

Snotlout tried to jump onto Hookfang. Hookfang moved and he fell into the dirt. "They're ignoring us! How do we get their attention?"

"Well, I might have an idea," Astrid told him avoiding Stormfly's tail again. "But it's stupid and reckless."

"You had me at stupid!" Snotlout said with a smile.

Stormfly and Hookfang tackled each other. Hookfang threw Stormfly away. She pawed the ground and began to charge.

Astrid ran in front of Stormfly. "Stormfly! If you're gonna attack him, you'll have to go through me."

Hookfang got up behind Astrid. Snotlout jumped in front of him.

"Look, Hookfang, we both know you can totally kick Stormfly's tail, but if you want to try, you'll have to go through me."

"\*\*Get out of the way, Astrid.\*\*"

"\*\*Snotlout, you little fool.\*\*"

The dragons circled with the riders keeping them apart.

"Astrid! Snotlout!" Fishlegs yelled down. "What are they doing?"

"I'm not sure," said Hiccup, "but I think they may be acting like a team."

Grim smirked. "Never underestimate the bond between rider and



dragon."

Stormfly let out one final roar at Astrid before she put her head down to allow Astrid to pet her.

"There's my girl," said Astrid.

Snotlout looked over and saw Stormfly was under control. He turned back to Hookfang. The Nightmare growled. Snotlout slowly put his hand up, worried Hookfang would bite him. He put his hand on Hookfang's nose. Hookfang shook his head and opened his eyes.

"\*\*Snotlout, I'm sorry,\*\*" said Hookfang.

"Ah, you big knucklehead," Snotlout said with a grin.

"They did it!" said Hiccup. "We have to get down there. But none of us can get close to that root without our dragons going nuts."

"That's not exactly true, Hiccup," said Fishlegs. "Meatlug didn't go crazy."

The twins and Barf and Belch got closer to the action. Too close.

"Meatlug is a Boulder Class dragon," said Grim. "She's been eating the soil around it. She's immune."

A fireball was fired at Toothless.

"What are you doing?" Fishlegs called to the twins.

"They're out of control!" the twin yelled.

Barf and Belch were trying to throw their riders off while firing at the other riders.

"You guys are too close to the dragon root!" Hiccup told them. "Pull up!"

"Pull up?" cried Ruffnut. "Are you crazy?"

"Yeah!" Tuffnut shouted. "This is awesome!"

Fishlegs knew he needed to act. "Hiccup, Grim, I'm going for the root! Cover us!"

Meatlug went down and put the dragon root in her mouth. She tried to pull it out.

"Come on, girl," Fishlegs urged. "Lift with your legs."

She was almost hit in the face by a fireball.

"This is scary but in a good way!" the twins yelled.

Toothless fired twice and Deathshriek shrieked at the Zippleback.

"I'm so sorry about this!" Hiccup yelled to the twins.

"We're not!" the twins shouted back.

"This is the best day ever!" said Tuffnut.

Toothless dodged another fireball from them.

"Hurry, Fishlegs!" Hiccup called.

Meatlug's grip slipped.

"She can't do it by herself," Fishlegs said.

"Yeah! Incoming!" Tuffnut yelled.

Barf and Belch swooped down and released a line of gas.

Snotlout turned to Astrid. "I think we better do something."

"For once, I actually agree with you," said Astrid.

"But if we get too close our dragons will start fighting again," Snotlout pointed out.

"I think I have an idea," Astrid told him.

"Is stupid and reckless?" asked Snotlout.

"Maybe even a little bit crazy," Astrid added.

"Loving it!" grinned Snotlout.

Barf and Belch made another pass.

Stormfly cut across in front of them.

"Astrid, you're a sight for sore eyes!" Fishlegs cried.

Stormfly turned around

"Who you callin' Astrid?" Snotlout said, putting his hands on his hips on the back of Stormfly.

"Snotlout?" Fishlegs said, confused. "What, where-?"

"Looking for me?" Astrid called from Hookfang's back.

"Astrid, what are you doing?" Hiccup asked.

"We switched dragons again," said Astrid. "It's the only way we can keep them from fighting each other."

"He can sniff dragon root all day, but Hookfang would never attack Snotlout. He respects him too much," Snotlout bragged.

Barf and Belch swooped down and third time, Barf releasing gas.

"Do it, Hookfang," said Astrid. "Wing blast!"

Hookfang flapped his wings hard, creating a gust of wind that blew the gas away and Barf and Belch out of the air.

"Yeah!" the dazed twins cheered.

"What was that?" cried Snotlout.

"You mean this?" Astrid asked.

Hookfang did it again. The force of the wind combined with Meatlug's efforts to pull out the dragon root, pulled it out part of the way.

"It's still stuck," said Astrid.

Barf and Belch got up, the twins having fallen out of their saddles. The Zippleback charged Meatlug.

"I'm on it!" called Snotlout. "Stormfly, single spine shot!" He tapped the back of her head.

Stormfly fired one spine and it cut through the last bit of the dragon root that was in the ground. Meatlug flew out of Barf and Belch's path. Barf and Belch started after them, but was stopped when Toothless and Deathshriek grabbed their tails.

"Good job, guys," said Hiccup. "Fishlegs, can you take it from here?"

"Dragon root flying out," said Fishlegs, steering Meatlug out over the ocean.

The dragons went back to normal after the dragon root was out of range. The others followed behind at a reasonable distance.

"You do realize what happened, right?" Hiccup asked Astrid and Snotlout.

"We totally kicked butt," said Snotlout.

"Exactly," said Hiccup. "And you did it together. Astrid and Snotlout working as a team. Who would have thought?"

"Huh! Not me!" said Tuffnut. "I try not to think."

Astrid looked at Snotlout. "That was some fancy flying on my dragon."

"You know how it is," said Snotlout. "Chicks dig me."

Astrid sighed. "Yeah, that must be it."

"Huh. Hookfang isn't always the easiest dragon to fly, Astrid. I have to admit I'm impressed."

Fishlegs took Meatlug far out to the ocean and had her drop the dragon root into the water.

Astrid brushed at her bangs. "So, do you think I can have my dragon back now?"

"Thought you'd never ask," said Snotlout.

The two of them jumped back to their dragons.

"Good to see you again, girl," Astrid said to Stormfly.

"Aw, miss me?" Snotlout asked, hugging Hookfang.

"\*\*Yeah, I did,\*\*" said Hookfang.

Snotlout laughed. "We can do something about the girl smell later," he whispered.

"\*\*Please do,\*\*" said Hookfang.

Later, they were back out in the field.

"So Snotlout," Astrid said. "Think you can teach me that single spine shot?"

"I don't know if you can handle it," said Snotlout. "Why don't you show me that wing clappy thing first and then I'll think about it."

Astrid laughed. "How stupid do you think I am?"

"How stupid is there?" asked Snotlout.

\* \* \*

><p>Stoick had come up to see how they were working. He patted Hiccup's shoulder. "Option three. Not as exciting as one and two."<p>

"But sure does go down like a treat," said Hiccup.

Stoick chuckled.

\* \* \*

><p><strong>Another chapter done. And for those who want to know more about Grim, you're in for a treat next chapter. Review.<strong>

## 16. Chapter 16

\*\*This is actually shorter than I thought it would turn out to be, but there is a lot of information in it.\*\*

\*\*For those wondering about the next installment of Dragon Trainer, Dragon Speaker, I am going to be starting it after the final book in the Dragons of Deltora series, in other words, it happens after the book series. For this story to work out as I plan it, all the Deltoran dragons must be present and accounted for. I actually got my Tales of Deltora book on Saturday and have read it. I want to stay as close to the book series as possible and I'll throw in some information about Deltora's history. It'll all be true to the series, no worries there.\*\*

\*\*Any questions about the next installment, ask in the review section, and please review the chapter, since I know some of you have been biting at the bit for this.\*\*

\* \* \*

><p>Grim hated being sick. The last time he was sick, he was on a boat sailing off to his death over two years ago.<p>

"\*\*You should rest,\*\*" said Deathshriek. "\*\*Everyone else who is sick is in the great hall. Maybe you should go over there as well.\*\*"

Grim shook his head. "\*\*You can take care of me. You've done it before.\*\*"

"\*\*This is different,\*\*" said Deathshriek. "\*\*There are humans here to properly take care of you.\*\*"

Grim shook his head again. "\*\*Can you get me up to Mildew's house? I don't want to get anyone else sick. I can sleep there.\*\*"

Deathshriek allowed Grim on his back and flew to Mildew's house. Once there, Grim stumbled inside and lay down on the floor.

"\*\*When you said sleep here, I thought you meant in a bed,\*\*" said Deathshriek.

"\*\*I'm more comfortable on the ground,\*\*" said Grim.

Deathshriek shook his head and got a fire going in the hearth. He watched Grim curl up in a ball. Deathshriek moved to lay beside Grim. It was going to be a long day.

Grim slept for the most part. His body ached and he was tired. However, his dreams wouldn't let him rest.

\* \* \*

><p><em>It had been a long time since he had seen the castle he grew up in. He was twelve again and listening to his tutor. He couldn't wait to go see his new best friend; a dragon he called Emerald.<em>

\_The tutor ended the lesson for the day and he ran to get ready to see his new friend. He snuck off the castle grounds and to where he knew Emerald would be.\_

\_"Emerald!" he called.\_

\_The green Nadder dragon sprang up from his hiding spot and cried to his human friend.\_

\_The young prince and Emerald played for an hour before he had to return to the castle.\_

\_"I will see you later, Emerald," said the young prince.\_

\_He returned to the castle.\_

\_This went on for months.\_

\_But one day it came to an end.\_

\_The young prince went out to see Emerald. He didn't even get off the castle grounds when he heard the cry of his dragon. Emerald flew overhead, roaring loudly. The prince wondered what was wrong.\_

\_"My young lord!" A servant had followed the prince. He grabbed the prince and pulled him to safety. "It is a dragon attack, young lord. We must return to the castle."\_

\_"But-," the prince started to protest.\_

\_The servant dragged the prince back to the castle. The prince heard a pain filled roar and then nothing.\_

\_The servant sighed. "It appears they killed it."\_

\_The prince paled. "What?"\_

\_"The dragon, young lord," the servant said.\_

\_The prince started running to the place where he heard the last roar. Outside of the village surrounded by soldiers was the body of a green Nadder.\_

\_"Emerald!" screamed the prince. "Emerald!"\_

\_A soldier grabbed him and pulled him away from the dragon. The prince kept screaming for his friend. Emerald did not open his eyes.\_

\_The prince was numb. The next few days were a blur to him. His father yelled at him, his mother wept as if he was the one dead, and his siblings wouldn't speak to him. The prince was hollow inside.\_

\* \* \*

><p>Deathshriek kept watch over Grim as his dreams became violent.<p>

"Smaragaid!" Grim started thrashing in his sleep.  
"Smaragaid!"

"\*\*Grim! Wake up!\*\*" Deathshriek roared. He tried to keep Grim from hurting himself. He licked his face to wake him up. It did nothing to wake Grim, but Deathshriek could feel how feverish Grim was becoming.

\* \* \*

><p><em>The former prince was thrown on a boat and cast off into the sea. He had pleaded with his father, the king, to not banish him, but the king said he was his son no more. For days the boat drifted in the ocean currents. One day there was a storm that moved the boat far to the north. Snow fell and ice formed. The former prince curled up on the deck and waited to die.<em>

\_"He would not have hurt anyone," the former prince babbled. "He would not have hurt me."\_

\_A heavy thump and a rough rocking of the boat caused the former prince to open his eyes. Frost had gathered on his skin and ice had formed in his hair. He saw a pair of black-clawed blue feet in front of him. Hot breath caressed his face. The former prince looked up into a pair of blue eyes the same shade as his. Black markings lined the slanted eyes that were staring at him.\_

\* \* \*

><p>Deathshriek looked around, but there was no one to help him. He didn't want to leave Grim alone, but it looked like he did not have a choice.<p>

\*\*\*I'll return,\*\*" Deathshriek said to Grim.

Deathshriek left Mildew's house and flew down to the great hall. He found Snotlout wrestling with a few Terrors and several other dragons watching.

Thornado turned to Deathshriek. "\*\*\*Where have you been? The other riders have gone searching for a cure to help the sick humans.\*\*"

\*\*\*Grim is ill,\*\*" Deathshriek said quickly. "\*\*\*And it is getting worse. Do you know when the other riders will return?\*\*\*"

\*\*\*No,\*\*" Hookfang replied. "\*\*\*Toothless and Hiccup are missing. Stormfly and Astrid took the healer and are preparing the cure for the humans. Toothless and Hiccup were to go to Eel Island to get the remaining ingredient. Meatlug and Fishlegs are searching for them.\*\*"

\*\*\*How bad is Grim?\*\*\*" asked Thornado.

\*\*\*He's yelling for Emerald in his sleep,\*\*" Deathshriek said brokenly. "\*\*\*I haven't seen him like this since I first found him in that boat.\*\*"

\*\*\*I guess Snotlout and the twins are having it easy then,\*\*" said Hookfang.

\*\*\*Snotlout and the twins are sick, too?\*\*\*" said Deathshriek. They looked over at Snotlout, who had gotten up and began babbling about dragons' rights. "\*\*\*Never mind. I don't know what to do for Grim.\*\*"

\*\*\*Bring him to the great hall,\*\*" said Thornado.

\*\*\*I don't know if I can,\*\*" said Deathshriek. "\*\*\*He is yelling in Irish. If the others hear, they may banish him.\*\*"

\*\*\*Over my dead body,\*\*" Thornado said sternly. "\*\*\*If Stoick even tries to banish the boy, the rest of the dragons go with him.\*\*"

Deathshriek's eyes widened as the other dragons nodded. "\*\*\*I'll see

if I can bring him down here.\*\*"

Deathshriek flew back to Mildew's house and found it empty. "\*\*\*Grim!  
Where are you?\*\*\*"

\* \* \*

><p>Grim had woken up and wandered out of the house. He stumbled down the hill to the village. Grim tripped and rolled and came to a stop at the bottom of the hill.<p>

\* \* \*

><p><em>The former prince had to be fed by a dragon. The dragon would swallow the fish and spit it back up for him. It was like a bird feeding her babies. It was disgusting, but it was food. The former prince couldn't find food for himself and the dragon was kind enough to feed him. While the blue and black dragon fed him, other dragons came around to see the human. They were all different colors.<em>

\_As the former prince got stronger, he got up and moved around to see where he was. The dragon who saved him would herd him like a sheep when it was time to eat. The other dragons looked after him as well, but it was mostly the blue and black dragon who took care of him.\_

\_One afternoon, the former prince was walking outside of the cave the dragons kept him in. It was nice to get some fresh air before another storm came. He wasn't aware he was being watched. A large dragon roared and attacked. There was a bloodcurdling shriek and the blue and black dragon shot blue fire at the attacking dragon. The attacking dragon decided to try for an easier meal and flew away.\_

\_The former prince turned to the blue and black dragon. "Was that you who screamed like that?"\_

\_The blue and black dragon checked him over and gave him a lick on the face.\_

\_"I should name you," said the former prince. "I name you Deathshriek. Do you like that name?"\_

\_The blue and black dragon cooed and herded the former prince back into the cave.\_

\* \* \*

><p>Grim woke up and got on his knees. He threw up what was in his stomach before staggering to his feet.<p>

"\*\*There you are!\*\*" Deathshriek bounded up to Grim and pushed him back to the ground. "\*\*\*What are you doing, wandering around here like this? You need to be resting. I am taking down to the great hall right now. You need help.\*\*"

Grim moaned and passed out again.

Deathshriek sighed. "\*\*\*I guess unconscious is better than you



staggering around aimlessly.\*\*"

Deathshriek picked up Grim by the arms and glided back to the great hall.

It was hours before Hiccup and Fishlegs returned with the cure for the sick. Grim had been moaning in Irish for most of the time, but had thankfully kept quiet. Deathshriek stayed by his side.

"\*\*It's all right, Grim. Sleep.\*\*"

Deathshriek was hoping what little he could do to comfort his friend would be enough. Grim's nightmares had started to become worse again. For a little while he hadn't moaned for Emerald in his sleep.

The Terror who had been cozying up to a delirious Snotlout came over to Deathshriek and Grim.

"\*\*How is he?\*\*" the Terror asked.

Deathshriek shook his head.

"\*\*Should I get another dragon to watch him?\*\*" said the Terror.  
"\*\*You don't look so good yourself.\*\*"

"\*\*Is Thornado around?\*\*" Deathshriek asked.

"\*\*Somewhere. Would you like me to get him so you can take a break?\*\*"

"\*\*Yes, please,\*\*" said Deathshriek.

A few minutes later, Thornado lumbered over. "\*\*Has he woken up yet?\*\*"

"\*\*Not since I brought him down here,\*\*" said Deathshriek.

"\*\*Grim's strong,\*\*" Thornado said. "\*\*He'll recover.\*\*"

Deathshriek nodded.

Grim moaned in Dragonese.

Deathshriek let out a sigh of relief. "\*\*At least it's in Dragonese.\*\*"

"What's going on over here, Thornado?" Stoick asked, sniffing.

The two dragons turned to Stoick and moved away to show Grim.

"Oh, Grim," said Stoick. "No wonder none of us have seen him all day."

Grim moaned and muttered in Irish.

Stoick frowned.

The two dragons became worried.

"Grim?" Stoick said.

Grim let out a string of words in Irish, begging for something.

Stoick looked horrified. "He's a Celt."

Deathshriek pushed himself between Stoick and Grim. "\*\*\*I won't let you hurt him.\*\*"

Thornado rumbled. "\*\*\*Stoick, don't do anything stupid.\*\*"

Stoick slowly walked away.

\* \* \*

><p>It was evening when Hiccup and Fishlegs returned with the cure. It was dished out to the sick Vikings.<p>

"We were so close to uniting our people," moaned Snotlout, lounging against a wall with the green Terror. "We could have had it all, you and me. We could have been kings among men and dragons. And now look at us. What have we got, huh? Nothing. Nothing!"

"Better make his a double dose," Gobber said to Stoick.

"Everyone, we've had a breakthrough," said Tuffnut, in a British accent. "Ruffnut has determined if you boiled yak milk, you could freeze it on a stick and dip it in a variety of tasty flavorings including coconut."

"I call it Ruff-cream!" Ruffnut cried.

Tuffnut turned on her. "Hold on! I thought it was Tuff-cream. We talked about this. In the other room, you said it could be Tuff-cream. Now did I mishear you or are you pulling the wool over my eyes, madam!"

"You would," said Ruffnut.

Gobber turned back to Stoick. "And a triple dose for those two mutton-heads. Ugh. Who would freeze perfectly good milk? Never heard of anything so barbaric in my life."

Grim was given the medicine and managed to sit with Hiccup and Fishlegs as they updated the Book of Dragons.

"I'm noting the skittish behavior, the fever, and the out of control fire power," Fishlegs said, writing in the book.

"Now we know why most dragons don't eat eels," said Hiccup. "It makes really sick."

"Except Typhoomerangs," Fishlegs said. "That's why they live on Eel Island."

"And that's why we're never going back to Eel Island," said Hiccup.

"Oh, thank Thor!" Fishlegs said in relief.

"It sounds like you have an eventful day," said Grim.

"You have no idea," said Fishlegs.

"Fishlegs and Meatlug took on a Typhoomerang by themselves," said Hiccup.

Grim smiled wearily. "You did? Most impressive, Fishlegs."

"Yeah, and I don't want to do it again," said Fishlegs, getting up.

Hiccup got up as well, helping Grim to his feet.

Hiccup paused and turned. "Hey, Fishlegs?"

"Yes, Hiccup?"

"Thank you," said Hiccup. "I don't know what we would have done without you, both of you."

Both boy and dragon cooed.

"Group hug, Meatlug!" Fishlegs cried.

Grim managed to step away before Fishlegs pounced on him. Meatlug soon joined them.

"Isn't this great?" Fishlegs said, Meatlug licking him and the Hiccup.

"Oh, yeah, it's great," strained Hiccup from under Meatlug's weight.

Grim chuckled. "If you wouldn't mind, I would like to sleep."

Meatlug got off the boys.

"Sure thing, Grim," said Hiccup. "I'll help you home."

Hiccup got up and took Grim's arm. The brothers and their dragons walked up to their house. They went inside and found Stoick sitting in his chair.

"Hiccup, I need to speak to Grim," Stoick said.

Hiccup looked at Grim to see if he knew what was going on, but Grim seemed as befuddled as Hiccup.

Grim gave Hiccup a small push. "I'll be up in a few minutes."

Hiccup nodded and went up to bed, Toothless following him.

"\*\*Go sleep by the fire, Deathshriek, you've earned it,\*\*" Grim said.

Deathshriek reluctantly lay down by the fire.

"Now what is it, Stoick?" Grim asked.

"I'd like to know why you haven't told anyone you are a Celt," Stoick said.

Grim stiffened. "Who told you this?"

"I heard you speaking Irish while we were in the great hall," said Stoick.

Grim's mouth twitched in the corners. "I never lied, Stoick. I told you the truth from the beginning. You were the one who never asked what tribe I was from."

"I thought you were a Viking because of your name," said Stoick.

"The dragons named me, just as I named Deathshriek," Grim explained. "My name is Grim Frosti, I was named by the dragons on the island I lived on for two years, and I abandoned my Irish connections the day they put me on that boat."

Stoick hummed. "You know if this gets out to the village, it could cause an uproar. I have already named you my adoptive son."

"Then we better be sure this doesn't get out," said Grim.

Grim went up to the room he shared with Hiccup.

"What was that about?" Hiccup asked.

"Nothing you need to worry about," said Grim. "But for now, you don't have to worry about keeping my Irish heritage a secret from Stoick."

Hiccup jumped up from his bed. "He knows?"

Grim nodded and curled up on his bed.

"If Dad has taken it so well, maybe we should tell the others," Hiccup said.

"I'm not sure that's a good idea," said Grim.

"We're just telling them you're Irish, not the other thing," Hiccup said quietly in case Stoick was still listening.

Grim sighed. "I will tell them."

"Soon?"

"Tomorrow," said Grim.

"Okay." Hiccup went back to bed.

\* \* \*

><p>In the morning, the riders gathered at the Academy.<p>

Astrid looked at Snotlout and the twins. "Are you sure we should be training today? Some of us are still recovering from eel pox."

"We have an announcement to make," Hiccup said. "Actually, Grim has an announcement to make."

Grim took a step forward. "You may want to sit."

The riders sat down on some crates while Hiccup elected to stay standing because he already knew what this was all about.

"I have a confession to make," Grim began.

"You really are a dragon?" Tuffnut blurted. "I knew it!"

"No," said Grim. "It has something to do with my life before I met Deathshriek. It is about the tribe I was banished from."

Fishlegs could see Grim was conflicted. "Are you sure you want to talk about this?"

"You don't have to if you don't want to," said Astrid.

Grim shook his head. "It has to be said. You are my friends and I trust you. Hiccup knows about this already and Stoick learned about it last night. I was banished because I befriended a dragon, not Deathshriek, but a Nadder I named Emerald, or in my mother tongue, Smaragaid."

"Smaragaid?" Snotlout repeated. "What kind of stupid language is that?"

Grim narrowed his eyes at Snotlout.

"Smaragaid?" Fishlegs said. "That sounds - are you Celtic?"

"Irish," Grim confirmed with a nod. "I was surprised you did not figure it out sooner, especially after what happened with Scauldy. The Irish song I learned when I was younger was the first song I could think of."

"So you're Irish," said Ruffnut.

Grim nodded.

"I guess we're okay with that," said Astrid. "You've been living with us for months and you haven't betrayed us or anything like that."

"No problem there," said Fishlegs.

"With a name like Grim?" Snotlout scoffed. "That's not Irish."

"The dragons named me," said Grim. "I wanted to forget everything about my life on Ireland."

"Is that all?" asked Astrid. "You're not going to say that you're a prince or something, are you?"

"No," said Grim. "Do you really think I could be royalty?"

"You do have a way with words and negotiating," Fishlegs pointed

out.

"And you knew how protocol worked with the Scottish," Astrid added.

"I'm not a prince," Grim assured.

"\*\*You lie,\*\*" said Deathshriek.

"\*\*I am a prince no longer,\*\*" Grim told him.

"\*\*You'll always be a prince in my eyes,\*\*" Deathshriek said.  
"\*\*Maybe not a prince of Ireland, but maybe a prince of dragons.\*\*"

Grim smiled.

Hiccup clapped his hands together. "Okay, now that that's out of the way, let's get to training."

\* \* \*

><p><strong>I had to take a guess at Emerald's Irish name and when I say Emerald, I mean the gem stone. I checked against a few websites and I'm guessing it's right. If not, I apologize. What did you think about my little trick? They now know he's Celtic, but they don't know he's a prince. Don't worry, eventually they'll learn he's a prince, I just don't know when I'm going to spill that secret.<strong>

## 17. Chapter 17

\*\*I'm surprised that no one commented on the last chapter. I usually have some vocal reviews.\*\*

\*\*I just got the Secrets of Deltora book in the mail today and have already started reading it. There is a lot of information I hope I'll be able to use in the next installment. This is going to be fun for me. I don't know if it'll be fun for you, but I'm so happy that I'm getting to do this.\*\*

\* \* \*

><p>It was only a few days after Grim told the other riders about his Irish origins when Trader Johann returned to Berk. The riders when down to the docks as soon as they saw his ship coming in.<p>

"Trader Johann is here, everyone! Trader Johann is here!" Fishlegs said excitedly.

Trader Johann threw the gangplank over the side. Fishlegs ran up onto the ships as soon as it touched the dock.

"Johann, Schmohann," said Snotlout, crossing his arms. "That guy never lets me touch any of his cool stuff."

"Well, that's because last time he was here you broke half of it," Hiccup pointed out, following Fishlegs at a calmer pace.

Snotlout scoffed. "It's my word against his."

Trader Johann stood with one foot on the side of the ship. "Ah, Berk! The crown jewel of the entire archipelago."

"Over here, Trader Johann!" Fishlegs called.

The other riders climbed aboard.

"What did you bring today?" Fishlegs asked.

"Oh, many wondrous things, Mister Fishlegs," Johann replied. "Treasures from every coast and every shore." He picked up a pair of earrings. "Like the pearls of danger. Perfect for that special lady in your life."

Snotlout leaned over to Astrid. "You know, those could be yours, Astrid. Just say the word."

Astrid crossed her arms. "Yuck." She walked away from him.

"That's not the word," Snotlout said at her retreating back.

Grim was holding a small bundle, a black ragged cloak on his shoulders.

"Master Grim," Johann said. "I see you have something to trade. Perhaps for a new cloak? The one you have there seems a little worn."

The cloak moved and revealed it was not just a cloak, but Fearcloak. The four red-eyed dragon put his head up and over Grim's shoulder to hiss.

Trader Johann jumped.

"Fearcloak, be nice," said Grim, scratching his snout.

Fearcloak jumped from Grim's shoulders to Trader Johann.

"He is fine," Grim quickly assured Trader Johann. "He is friendly. He wants to see if you're a friend."

Trader Johann chuckled as Fearcloak sniffed and got himself comfortable on his shoulders. "Friendly indeed. He doesn't bite, does he?"

"Not unless you have a fish or you have angered him," Grim said.

Fearcloak purred and licked the back of Trader Johann's neck. Trader Johann shivered in disgust.

"All right, Fearcloak, off you get," said Grim, reaching out for Fearcloak. The Creeping Shadow climbed back onto Grim's shoulders. "And these are for you, Johann. I have two vests and several belts."

"Thank you, Master Grim," said Johann. "Let me know if you see anything you fancy. We will work out a trade as always."

Gobber was looking around the ship for something.

"Ah, Mister Gobber," said Johann. "What can I interest you in?"

"Why don't you wow me, Johann? Knock me off my feet," said Gobber.

"Putting me to the test, are you?" Johann chuckled.

"Hang on," said Gobber, walking over to a pile covered with a blanket. "What's under here?"

"Oh, nothing too exciting," replied Johann. "Just an old pile of -."

Gobber pulled off the blanket. "Scrap metal!" he cried happily. "It's perfect. I've run out of things to pound around here."

"Whoa," Tuffnut said. "It's the most beautiful thing I've ever seen."

"It's just scrap metal," Astrid said.

"No! I'm talking about this mace." Tuffnut ran over and picked up the mace. "Hey, mace. Wanna come home with me, don't you? Yes, I do, Tuffnut," he added in a girly voice. "I want to needlessly destroy other people's property with you." He chuckled. "Oh, Macy, you get me."

Astrid watched on in disturbance.

Trader Johann turned up the charm to make a sell to Gobber. "I see you are a gentleman that recognizes quality when he sees it. This is the finest metal from the furthest regions of the archipelago."

Gobber bit down on a broken sword to test the metal. "I'll take it all."

"Excellent! Always a pleasure, Mister Gobber."

Toothless nudged some of the scrap metal and growled. It was masked by a loud crash. Trader Johann cringed and turned. Snotlout was standing amongst a pile of broken merchandise.

"Wasn't me," he quickly said and walked away.

Trader Johann groaned. "I really hate that kid."

Gobber tried to move the scrap pile on his own, but found it was too heavy for one Viking. "Hiccup, do you think you can spare hook, son?"

"Not a problem, Gobber. Hey, guys!"

Fishlegs, Astrid, and the twins mounted their dragons.

"Let's do this, Macy!" Tuffnut said, holding up the mace.

"\*\*You're strange,\*\*" Belch commented.



Snotlout got up on Hookfang, but was pulled back by Gobber.

"Not so fast, you! I paid good money for this scrap. I'll not have you dropping it into the ocean."

Astrid, Fishlegs, and the twins took the scrap metal back to Gobber's shop.

Trader Johann turned back to Grim. "Now, Master Grim, have you found anything of interest?"

"Not this time, Johann," said Grim. "I am still paying the debt for the tools you gave me, am I not?"

"No, you paid that debt the last time I visited," Johann said, waving off Grim. "You deserve to have something else from my wares other than the tools I gave you. I visited an island off the coast of fair Ireland not too long ago. Would you be interested in some Celtic blades?"

Hiccup looked at Grim. "It's worth a look. I don't think anyone will question you about them now that we told the others."

"Told the others what, Master Hiccup?" asked Johann.

"That I am a Celt by blood," Grim answered quietly.

Trader Johann smiled. "I always thought you were Irish decent."

"You did?" asked Hiccup.

"Why? How did you know?" Grim asked.

"You didn't act like other Vikings," said Johann. "And the way you make your dragon scale clothes. Some of them have somewhat Irish designs. Have you thought about putting Celtic knots in some of them?"

"I rather not," said Grim. "Too many painful memories."

"Very well, then," said Johann. "Maybe something else? Fine fabrics? Jewels?"

"Come now, Johann, you know I am one of simple tastes," Grim said.

Trader Johann smiled and found a large leather pack. "Something to carry your dragon scales in."

Grim inspected the pack. It had a large metal buckle to keep it closed and several brass buttons to close the side pouches. It also had two thick leather straps made it possible for one to wear it on their back.

"It is good strong leather from the tanneries of the Lunatic Leather-Makers," said Johann.

"It is good leather," said Grim, testing it by giving it a tug. "I'll take it."

"Excellent!" said Johann.

"Thank you, Johann," Grim said.

"Always a pleasure doing business with you, Master Grim," Johann replied.

\* \* \*

><p>The next morning, Hiccup and Grim walked into the village with their dragons.<p>

"I had those ladles when I went to sleep and now they're gone," a woman said.

"My grandmother's goblets, gone!" cried the man she was talking to.

Hiccup looked around. "Okay. What did we just walk into?"

Toothless made a worried warble. "\*\*\*I'm not sure.\*\*\*"

They walked over to the other riders.

"What is going on here?" Hiccup asked.

"A bunch of stuff got stolen from the village last night," Snotlout answered, uninterested.

"And some of us are taking it pretty hard," Astrid said. She motioned to Tuffnut.

Tuffnut was sobbing. "Macy! Macy! Oh, golly, she's gone! NO!"

Barf and Belch looked at each other. "\*\*\*All this over a mace?\*\*\*" they said to each other.

Tuffnut turned to Ruffnut. "You! You were always jealous of her. You knew I loved her more because I told you every so often and I wrote it in your room on the wall."

Stoick walked over to riders. "We have quite a situation on our hands. Axes, shields, helmets, drinking goblets, all stolen."

"Axes, shields, helmets, drinking goblets," Hiccup repeated in thought, rubbing his chin. "What do all those things have in common?"

"Obviously, duh!" Snotlout knocked on his helmet. "They're all gone."

"No, they're metal," Hiccup said. "Everything that's missing is metal."

"Hiccup, everything we own is metal," Astrid told him.

"It's a theory," Hiccup said. "Work with me."

Tuffnut continued crying. "Missing the little spikes around her head

the most."

Hiccup and Astrid rolled their eyes.

"Whatever is going on, I need to find who's responsible before this panic gets any worse," Stoick said.

Gobber ran up to them. "Stoick! Bucket and Mulch are slapping each other with sturgeons!"

They turned to see Bucket and Mulch beating each other with said fish.

"What happened to their bludgeons?" Stoick asked.

"Stolen," replied Gobber, "hence the sturgeon."

Stoick hummed. "In some ways I guess that's probably better."

"Uh, Dad, what do you say you take care of the sturgeon slapping while Astrid, Grim, and I do a little investigating?" Hiccup suggested.

Stoick nodded and made his way over to Bucket and Mulch to break up the fight.

"Investigating?" Astrid asked. "What exactly are you planning, Hiccup?"

"To return to the scenes of the crimes and see if we can find out something about this metal thief," Hiccup answered.

"Anything to get away from Tuffnut's emotional breakdown," Grim said, glancing at the distraught twin. "Disgraceful."

\* \* \*

><p>Their first stop was Gobber's shop. It was almost completely cleaned out.<p>

"Gobber, can you remember who's been here the last couple of days?" Hiccup asked.

Gobber hummed and scratched his head with his hook hand. "Hard to say. Business has been booming. There's only forty-one shopping days until Snoggletog, you know. Don't wait until the last minute. Other than myself, I can be certain of Grim. You had to finish up your shipment for Trader Johann."

Grim nodded as he looked around the shop. In addition of Gobber being robbed, Grim had been, too. A few of his tools were missing along with one of the presents he was working on for Snoggletog.

"No footprints," Hiccup said.

Grim looked at the woodwork for anything out of the ordinary.

Toothless was sniffing around. "\*\*\*Something smells strange.\*\*"

"\*\*What does?\*\*" asked Grim.

"\*\*Dragon,\*\*" replied Toothless. "\*\*It smell familiar, but I can't think of where I smelled it before.\*\*"

"This metal thief won't get the best of me," Gobber proclaimed, walking to the back of his shop. "I set a booby trap that's guaranteed to nab him."

There was a loud click and Gobber froze.

"What's the matter?" Astrid asked.

"It would appear that I've trapped myself in my own booby." There were about a dozen loaded crossbows pointed at Gobber. "No one move a muscle."

\* \* \*

><p>It took the better of the afternoon to get Gobber safely out of his own trap. They checked in with some of the other Vikings who had things stolen. Late in the afternoon, they stopped at the twins' house.<p>

"This is where Macy was before her 'disappearance', quote unquote," Tuffnut said, glaring at Ruffnut.

"I didn't take your stupid mace!" Ruffnut yelled.

Tuffnut had a shrine set up for the mace complete with flowers and skulls.

"It was her favorite spot," said Tuffnut. "She just loved watching the sunsets. Or this wall just depending on what side I left her on." He gave a strangled sob. "Sunsets."

"This is weird," Astrid said to Hiccup.

"Even for the twins," Hiccup agreed.

"Hey! Leave me out of this one," Ruffnut said.

"With pleasure, Ruffnut," Grim added.

Hiccup went over to the door. "Strange. No forced entry. Not a single footprint."

"And no eyewitnesses," Astrid said.

"I just don't get it," Hiccup said.

"I do." They turned to Ruffnut. "It's so obvious. And you call yourselves detectives."

"First of all, no, actually we don't call ourselves detectives," said Hiccup. "And second, what's so obvious?"

Ruffnut waved them in. "What you're looking for is not just a metal thief. It's a ghost metal thief. Uh-huh."

The three of them walked out the door.

"Well, that was helpful as usual," Hiccup said.

"It's getting late," Astrid said. "We'll start again in the morning."

\* \* \*

><p>When everyone was sleeping, smoke filled the village. It broke into houses and took metal objects. It crept into the chief's house and up the stairs to the room the brothers and dragons shared.<p>

A small chirping sound woke Toothless. He jumped up from his slab at the smoke in the room.

"\*\*What in the world?\*\*" he called.

Deathshriek woke up and saw the smoke as well. "\*\*Grim!\*\*"

Hiccup was yanked into the air by the leg and hung upside down. "Toothless! Grim! Toothless!"

Grim was startled awake with a screech. He couldn't see what was going on. "Hiccup!"

Toothless dove into the smoke and found Hiccup's hands. He bit down on one of them with his gums and pulled him down.

"\*\*That's enough!\*\*" snarled Toothless. He began beating his wings. The smoke cleared to reveal small gray dragons with yellow eyes. They were breathing smoke and holding metal objects.

"Smothering Smokebreaths?" said Hiccup.

The small dragons flew around the room grabbing anything metal they could. Hiccup had to fight to keep his helmet away from them.

Grim hid his dragon claw gloves with the Gronkle iron tips. A Smokebreath who was gutsy enough to steal from Grim was rewarded with a punch to the head. It floundered in the air before retreating.

Deathshriek screamed and Toothless fired a plasma blast at the dragons.

"Well, looks like we found our thief," said Hiccup, looking at Toothless.

Grim grunted and rubbed his sore knuckles.

\* \* \*

><p>In the morning, Hiccup and Grim found that they weren't the only ones robbed. The other riders were missing their helmets and Astrid was missing her shoulder armor. With them was Stoick.<p>

"Hey, guys," Hiccup said, "we know who the thief is. Or should I say we know who are \_thieves\_ are."

The riders looked at each other.

"Adolescent Smokebreath dragons," Hiccup announced.

"Of course!" said Fishlegs. "Smokebreaths steal metal to build their nests."

"But why would Smokebreaths be on Berk?" Stoick asked.

"Chief, coming in for the big win," Fishlegs said enthusiastically. "Smothering Smokebreaths normally don't stray far from their home on Break-Neck Bog."

"That's the part I'm still unclear about," Hiccup admitted.

"I've been robbed!" Gobber ran up to them. "The thief evaded my booby traps and took all the metal I bought from Trader Johann. Left me with nary a scrap of . . . scrap!"

Hiccup turned to Stoick. "Dad, I think I might know how the Smokebreaths got here."

Stoick, Hiccup, Toothless, and Grim began to walk up to the great hall.

"\*\*This explains why the scent was so familiar,\*\*" Grim said to Toothless.

"\*\*The Smokebreaths were the last thing on my mind,\*\*" Toothless said. "\*\*I wish I would have figured it out sooner. Maybe then Hiccup wouldn't have been pulled from bed in the middle of the night.\*\*"

"\*\*If we would have known, we still may not have avoided that,\*\*" said Grim. "\*\*Don't be so hard on yourself. Hiccup's fine. I was barely able to do a thing.\*\*"

"\*\*You punched one of them,\*\*" Toothless reminded him.

Grim rubbed at his hand again. "\*\*I have marks to prove it.\*\*" His knuckles had taken a scuffing from clipping the Smokebreath's horn when he had punched it.

They found Trader Johann telling stories to two Vikings and eating a leg of mutton.

Trader Johann noticed them come in. "Ah, Master Hiccup, Master Grim, and the great chief. To what do I owe this pleasure?"

"It may not be a pleasure in a moment, Johann," Grim said quietly.

"Well, Johann, we were wondering where you may have gotten that scrap metal you sold Gobber," said Hiccup.

"Unfortunately, old friend, I can't possibly reveal my sources," Johann replied.

Stoick took a step forward and growled.

Trader Johann shrank back. "Of course there are times when it's best to share. I procured it from a Berserker who was offering at a price I could not refuse. He'd just come from an island we both well equally fear."

"Break-Neck Bog," said Hiccup.

"You didn't hear that from me," Johann added in a scared voice.

"Oh, that wasn't just a pile of scrap metal, Johann, that was a Smokebreath nest with hatchlings inside it," Hiccup told him.

"Well, that's unfortunate news," Johann said nervously.

Stoick sighed heavily and they turned to leave. Toothless took the opportunity to express his dislike for the entire mess and growled at Trader Johann before turning sharply and letting his tail swing behind him. Trader Johann was forced to duck and dropped his mutton.

"No need to thank me!" Johann called after them.

"That answers how the Smokebreaths came to be here," Grim said as they walked down the stairs of the great hall.

In the village, things were falling apart quite literally: wheelbarrows, buckets, benches.

Gobber came over.

"Gobber, what's the latest?" Stoick asked.

"Just what I feared, Stoick," Gobber answered. "Almost no metal left in all of Berk."

"What about the armory?" Stoick asked.

"Eh, let's just say the axe handles outnumber the axes," Gobber said. "Oh, and then there's this." He gave a catapult a tap and it completely fell apart.

"Without weapons, Berk is vulnerable," Stoick said.

"Dad, we still got the dragons," Hiccup said, trying to reassure his father.

"And Dagur has an armada," Stoick reminded him. "Five dragons are no match for a large scale attack."

"Eight," said Grim. "You forget about your own dragon and Axewing and Grindheart."

"Grindheart is hardly reliable in the daylight," Stoick said. "At most we have seven."

"I can rally a few more," Grim said.

Stoick looked down at his adopted son. "A handful of dragons won't make a big difference."

"You underestimate us," Grim said.

"We still need weapons." Stoick left that as his last word and walked away with Gobber.

The riders met up at the Academy.

"We have to find that missing metal," Hiccup said. "Especially the weapons."

Tuffnut shuddered. "Macy must be so alone and scared out there. It's hard out there for a mace." He put his head in his hands. "Oh, Macy," he moaned.

"Maybe the Smokebreaths took the metal back to Break-Neck Bog," Astrid said.

Grim shook his head. "That amount of metal would be far too heavy for them to fly back with. The chances are everything is still on the island."

Ruffnut looked at Snotlout. "Hey, Snotlout, how did you get your helmet back?"

Snotlout indeed was wearing a helmet. He laughed. "It's my spare. A real warrior is never without his helmet."

Astrid scoffed. "Can't say the same for his brain," she said.

"What is it with you today?" Snotlout snapped at her. "You are so â€"ah!"

Stormfly fired a spine and it clipped his helmet, causing it to spin.

"Hey!" he yelled.

"Snotlout, come on. Please, focus," said Hiccup.

"Come on, really?" Snotlout retorted.

Stormfly fired again. Snotlout growled angrily at her.

Hiccup continued. "If the Smokebreaths didn't take the metal back to Break-Neck Bog, then there is a nest somewhere on Berk."

"Awesome!" blurted Tuffnut.

They all turned to him with annoyed looks.

"Not awesome?" Tuffnut asked.

"Definitely not awesome," Astrid said. "How are we going to find them? They could be anywhere."

"There's only one way to catch a metal thief, and that's -." Hiccup was cut off by Tuffnut.

"No! Don't tell me. With a net. No, a rope! No? Okay, don't say it.



With a ropey-net."

"I was just going to say with metal," Hiccup said flatly.

Tuffnut yelled. "It was on the tip of my tongue. Stupid tongue." He turned to Ruffnut and stuck out his tongue. "Flick it, flick it."

Ruffnut happily obliged.

"Oh, yeah," Tuffnut said.

"We need to gather all the metal from the arena and bait a trap the Smokebreaths won't be able to resist," Hiccup explained. "We lure them in, let them take the metal, and follow them right back to the nest and all our missing weapons."

"You did say all the metal, right, Hiccup? Astrid turned to Snotlout.

Snotlout was whistling and rubbing one of the ram horns of his helmet. "What?" He looked up at his helmet. "Oh, you got to be kidding me. What about his leg? That's made of metal."

"Snotlout!" Hiccup cried in disbelief.

"All I'm saying is fair is fair," Snotlout said.

"Snotlout, please!"

\* \* \*

><p>In the evening, Astrid put the finishing touches on the trap by placing Snotlout's helmet on top of the metal pile in the village square. She then hid behind some barrels with Snotlout.<p>

"I still think we should have flipped a yak pie for this," Snotlout complained.

Hiccup shushed him. "They've taken the bait."

The smoke surrounded the metal pile.

"Okay, very important," Hiccup whispered, "no one do absolutely anything until I give the signal."

"Get 'em!"

The twins swooped down on Barf and Belch and lit up the smoke.

The other riders stared at the fireball they created.

"Yet another plan perfectly executed," Hiccup said sarcastically. "Dragons, everyone!"

The twins only succeeded in catching themselves.

"Follow them!" Grim called, taking off on Deathshriek after the cloud of smoke.

The riders followed behind him.

"Okay," Hiccup said to Toothless. "Don't lose them, bud."

The Smokebreaths split up.

"Okay, tricky," Hiccup said. "Everyone, split up!"

Everyone took a small group of Smokebreaths. Grim and Deathshriek followed a group that was flying to the coast. Deathshriek and Grim turned invisible to make the Smokebreaths think they had out flown them. It worked and the Smokebreaths slowed down and made a loop around the coast and back inland.

"\*\*Wait,\*\*" Grim whispered.

Deathshriek paused and hovered. "\*\*What?\*"

"\*\*Look there!\*"

They both became visible to see each other. Grim pointed out to sea and Deathshriek turned to look at Grim was pointing at.

There were a bunch of dark shapes on the horizon.

"\*\*Those are ships,\*\*" said Grim.

"\*\*I don't recall any Berkian ships sailing off,\*\*" Deathshriek said.

"\*\*Those aren't Berkian vessels,\*\*" Grim growled. "\*\*We have to warn the others.\*\*"

Deathshriek wheeled around and began to fly back to the village. They came across Astrid on the way.

"Astrid! Find Hiccup and get everyone back to the village!" he yelled to her.

"What's going on?"

"Berserkers!" Grim replied, not having Deathshriek pause as they hurried back to the village. It did not take him long to find Stoick and told him what he saw.

"This is bad," Stoick sighed. "We have few weapons and only a few dragons."

"What do you need me to do?" Grim asked.

"Get as many dragons as you can," Stoick said. "We will need all the help we can find to defend our shores."

Grim nodded and went out to get Axewing and Grindheart. When he brought them back to the village, he brought one other dragon; Fanghook. The purple and gold Nightmare was told to stay out of sight.

Grim called for Fearcloak and the two of them stopped at Gustav's.

"You may have to fight in this battle, Gustav," Grim said quietly. "I rather you not fight, but we may not have a choice. Stay out of sight until the Berserkers step foot on Berk. Do you understand?"

Gustav nodded. "Yes, sir!"

Grim gave a smirk. "Good."

Grim returned to find the other riders in the village square.

"Trader Johann said he bought the scrap metal from a Berserker," Hiccup was telling the village.

"And it was from Break-Neck Bog," Fishlegs added.

"Dagur planted those dragons," said Astrid. "He knew what they would do."

"Hiccup, you found the Smokebreath nest," said Stoick. "You and the other riders go to it and get our weapons."

"They'll be protecting it by now," Hiccup said.

"And we will not have the time to retrieve the weapons and return before Dagur attacks," Grim added.

"Then I say we go out there and blast those Berserkers with what we got," said Snotlout.

"Even with our dragons and whoever Grim managed to find, the seven of us won't be able to take out those ships alone," said Hiccup.

"Well," said Tuffnut, "if we cut ourselves in half, we'd be . . . twice as many."

Astrid put her hand on her hip. "Just once, try stopping it between here -," she pointed to her head, "and here." She pointed to her mouth.

Tuffnut mimicked the gesture, not understanding it.

"No, he's actually on to something," said Hiccup.

"See? I'll get an axe," Tuffnut said.

"What? No, you don't need an axe," said Hiccup. "We don't need more of us. We need more dragons."

"What are you saying, son?" asked Stoick.

"Why fight against the Smokebreaths when we can fight with them?" said Hiccup. "Everyone, bring any metal you might still have left in your houses. It doesn't matter how small it is." Hiccup ran to Toothless.

"You heard my son!" boomed Stoick.

The crowd dispersed to gather what metal they could find.

Gobber came up to Hiccup. "I gutted my first Outcast with this." He removed his metal hook and handed it to Hiccup. "Take good care of it."

"Thank you, Gobber," Hiccup said. "I will."

\* \* \*

><p>The riders were able to gather several nets full of metal objects. They flew over the Smokebreaths' nest.<p>

Hiccup called back, "Ruff, Tuff, sound the dinner bell!"

The twins began banging on pots and pans.

"Come and get it, smoke butts!" Ruffnut taunted, dropping a pan.

"Yeah, smoke butts, come and get it!" Tuffnut taunted. "You foggy bottoms."

Hiccup turned around to see the Smokebreaths following them. "Okay, there they are. We need to pick up the pace. If they get this metal we're done."

They began leading the Smokebreaths to port.

\* \* \*

><p>The other Vikings were waiting for the Berserks to arrive. Axewing and Grindheart waited with them with Fang hook hiding nearby in case he was needed.<p>

"Arm yourself with whatever you can find," Stoick told them. "We will battle to the end."

The riders flew over their heads with the Smokebreaths following closely behind.

"Dagur's fleet up ahead!" called Hiccup.

They flew over the ships.

"Okay, gang! Metal away!" Hiccup ordered.

They opened the nets and the metal fell on the ships. The Smokebreaths went into a frenzy to get the metal. The riders flew back to a safe distance to watch. The Smokebreaths finished their work and began to fly away. The armada was still intact.

"Hiccup," Astrid called, "I thought it was supposed to -."

"Wait for it," Hiccup told her.

There were loud groans from below them and the ships quickly broke apart. Berserkerers clambered onto anything that floated.

"This is not over, Hiccup!" Grim heard Dagur yell. "You hear me? You

just wait! You will kiss this boot!"

Grim turned around to see two Smokebreaths steal his helmet and one knee pad. He steered Deathshriek over to where Dagur could see him clearly. Grim gave a mocking bow before flying away.

They returned to Berk.

"Well done, sons," Stoick chuckled.

"We'll return everyone's metal just as soon as get the Smokebreaths back to Break-Neck Bog," said Hiccup.

"And how do you plan on doing that?" Stoick asked.

"I think we know someone who will be happy to help," Hiccup answered.

Stormfly and Hookfang dropped off a bunch of metal on Trader Johann's sailing ship. Toothless and Deathshriek flew on either side of the ship.

"But, Master Hiccup, this can't be the only solution," cried Johann. He cringed as the Smokebreaths flew around the ship.

"Think of the story you'll have to tell," Hiccup called down to him. "Next stop: Break-Neck Bog!"

The two riders escorted Trader Johann back to Break-Neck Bog. It was not a quiet flight by any means, but Hiccup and Grim found it greatly amusing.

\* \* \*

><p><strong>Grim just loves making Dagur mad. Hee-hee!<strong>

## 18. Chapter 18

\*\*I apologize for the long wait. We are soon at the end of this installment and I want to have the next installment well on its way when I begin posting. In answer to MrColorado's question about reading a summary of each of the Deltora books, I think you can get away with that and the story still makes sense. Hiccup and Grim have to learn what has happened as well. I think what you really need to focus on is the major events and the characters. It would be nice if you do read the series because it is very good.\*\*

\* \* \*

><p>Snoggletog came and went. Grim had finished his gifts on time and had a stroke of luck for Ruffnut's gift. A Gronkle had eaten the same rock combination to make Gronkle iron and had spewed it near the village. Deathshriek had been with and Grim had used his knowledge of not having a real forge to quickly pound it into a dagger. It would be a replacement for the one she lost when they rescued Scauldy. He set it with scales from Barf's neck into the handle. Tuffnut got a belt with Belch's scales. Fishlegs got a new notebook with a cover made from leather and Gronkle scales from Meatlug. Astrid got two daggers made from Stormfly's spines. Snotlout was given a pair of

leather bracers trimmed with Hookfang's scales. Hiccup was given a spyglass made from an old dragon horn. Stoick was given a pendant made from a tooth Thornado lost a few days before Snoggletog.<p>

After Snoggletog passed, the weather became sunnier and Grim realized it would soon be a year since he first came to Berk. Not that it really mattered to him, but he made it a point that he soon needed to visit Grim Island again. There was no doubt the dragons there were missing him.

Hiccup had been working on a new project. He was calling it a thunder ear. It reminded Grim of the hearing trumpets he saw some nobles with who were hard of hearing. It was five feet wide at one end and less than six inches at the other. Hiccup and Fishlegs were going to test it out with Stoick helping them.

Grim decided to spend the day outside of the village with Deathshriek and practice their aerial maneuvers. They flew above the clouds where Grim jumped off and plummeted to the ground before Deathshriek caught him at the last moment. They would fly close to the sea stacks and Deathshriek would make quick, sharp turns. Grim was holding on to Deathshriek with only his legs. He raised his arms above his head and roared happily. Deathshriek roared as well.

"\*\*Your dragon call is becoming more dragon like every time,\*\*" Deathshriek commented. "\*\*It is sounding less like my own as well.\*\*"

"\*\*I thought it was supposed to be more personalized for me,\*\*" Grim said.

"\*\*As it should be,\*\*" said Deathshriek. "\*\*Call again.\*\*"

Grim roared again.

"\*\*Now sing, Grim.\*\*"

Grim changed his roar to a song. It was loud and long and on key. Deathshriek soon joined in, his part a bit lower than Grim's.

"\*\*Higher,\*\*" Deathshriek said.

Grim's voice rose an octave, then two, then three. It was almost like a scream than a song, but there was still something beautiful about it.

"\*\*Excellent,\*\*" said Deathshriek.

Grim laughed and tilted slightly on Deathshriek to get him to turn.

"\*\*Let me hear your other calls. Nadder.\*\*"

Grim let out a Nadder call before squawking like one.

Deathshriek chuckled. "\*\*Nightmare.\*\*"

Grim adjusted his vocal cords to mimic a Nightmare. "\*\*Snotlout,

you're an idiot!\*\*"

Deathshriek roared with laughter. "\*\*\*You are around Hookfang too much.\*\*"

\* \* \*

><p>They flew back to the village for dinner. Gobber was going to put on his one Viking spectacular tonight and Grim was a bit curious about it. Grim waited in the great hall for him, but Hiccup and Stoick came in instead.<p>

"Where have you been?" Grim asked.

"We found some baby Thunder Drums," Hiccup said. "We spent the day watching them."

"Ready for Gobber's one Viking spectacular?" Grim asked.

"Ah, Gobber won't be performing tonight," Hiccup said, scratching the back of his neck. "Dad heard him say that he was his right hook man and that he would do nothing without him. So he put him on night duty with the thunder ear."

Grim chuckled. "Pity. I was looking forward to it. So what happened to the baby Thunder Drums?"

"We left them where they were," Hiccup replied. "Dad didn't want to bring them back since they were so noisy."

"They were out there by themselves?" Grim asked. "How big were they?"

"Not that big, but I don't think they were just hatched either," said Hiccup.

Grim sighed. "You should have brought them back with you. If they are that small, they need a parent figure, a mentor. Can they hunt and fish for themselves?"

"I never really thought about that," said Hiccup. "Dad said they were Thunder Drums and they would be fine on their own."

Grim shook his head. "Hiccup, they could be killed out there!" He ran his hand through his hair. "I will need to find them."

"Not tonight," said Hiccup. "You won't be able to see them."

Grim huffed. "I am going out at first light with Deathshriek." He shook his head again. "What was Stoick thinking?" He got up and went back to the house.

\* \* \*

><p>The household was awakened the next morning by a loud boom that shook the entire house. Hiccup and Grim were both knocked out of bed.<p>

"What's happening? What?" Hiccup looked around before jumping up and dashing down the stairs after Grim.

Stoick had a sword in one hand and was putting on his helmet.

"What's going on?" Hiccup asked.

"I was about to ask you the same question," Stoick replied.

Humans and dragons ran outside. Three Thunder Drums the size of large sheep were flying around the town destroying apple carts, terrorizing sheep, and creating classic mayhem.

Stoick turned to Hiccup. "Still think they're cool?"

"Well, I'm on the fence," Hiccup replied.

"Well, get off it and do something before we have to rebuild the entire village," Stoick ordered.

Hiccup and Grim got on Toothless and Deathshriek.

"You wouldn't have anything to do with this, would you?" Hiccup asked Grim.

"Why would you think I have anything to do with this?" Grim asked.

"Well, you did say they couldn't be out there on their own," replied Hiccup.

Grim glared at Hiccup. "I would not bring them here without saying something first. Besides, I never woke up when I wanted to."

They watched as the little blue Thunder Drum destroyed the thunder ear.

"Okay, guys, fun time's over," said Hiccup.

Toothless roared what could be considered a warning call and began chasing the Thunder Drums.

"Duck, Silent Sven!" Hiccup yelled to the mute Viking. He just missed getting hit by the Thunder Drums. "Sorry about that, Sven."

The Thunder Drums then went into the forge.

"My shop!" cried Gobber.

"Sorry, Gobber," Hiccup apologized. "I'm trying my best."

Astrid flew over to Hiccup. "Should I even bother asking what's going on?"

"Out of control baby Thunder Drums, that's what's going on."

The little blue Thunder Drum fired a sonic blast at Hiccup and Toothless. Hiccup covered his ears.

"And I'm guessing you would like them under control," Astrid said.



"That would be preferred, yes," Hiccup responded. "Can you help me wrangle them into Academy?"

"Thought you'd never ask," replied Astrid.

They joined Grim and Deathshriek trying to corral the Thunder Drums, but they kept twisting and twirling out of the way.

"Wow! They're slippery little guys," said Astrid.

"No kidding!" Hiccup said.

Two of the Thunder Drums buzzed the twins while they were on Barf and Belch.

"Whoa! What are those things?" Ruffnut asked.

"They are loud and destructive dragons," Hiccup called to them. "We have to stop them!"

"Au contraire!" said Tuffnut. "We must own them."

"Immediately," his twin added.

The twins followed the Thunder Drums, but the young dragons split up. Barf tried to go one way while Belch when the other. It resulted in a crash.

Snotlout chased after the purple Thunder Drum. "You're all mine!"

The Thunder Drum dove for the water and pulled up at the last minute. Hookfang couldn't.

"Coming in too hot!" Snotlout pulled back on Hookfang's horns. "Pull up! Pull up!"

"\*\*Eels!\*\*" swore Hookfang just before dragon and rider disappeared in the water.

Grim had Deathshriek hover. "\*\*This is going nowhere. The more we chase them, the more they think it is a game.\*\*"

"\*\*Clearly they do not have a parent or a mentor. They have too much play in them. They cannot be on their own,\*\*" said Deathshriek.

"\*\*We have to stop them,\*\*" Grim said.

"\*\*Try your Thunder Drum dialect. Perhaps they will listen to someone who speaks like them,\*\*" Deathshriek suggested.

Grim let out his best Thunder Drum call to get their attention. The three little dragons looked at him and kept flying.

Toothless sped by.

"Nice try, Grim!" Hiccup called.

Thornado and Stoick came around to cut off the Thunder Drums. The three Thunder Drums fired their sonic blasts at Thornado. Thornado roared back, "\*\*\*That's enough!\*\*\*"

The three Thunder Drums immediately landed where they were and sat there.

Toothless and Meatlug landed just behind the Thunder Drums.

"Well done, Dad," Hiccup commented.

"Look at that!" Fishlegs exclaimed. "They're putty in Thornado's hand. Paw, claw, whatever."

The twins landed next to Fishlegs.

"Okay, we want that one," said Tuffnut, pointing to one Thunder Drum.

"No, that one," Ruffnut said, pointing at another.

"It's such a hard decision," Tuffnut said. "Okay, we'll take the set."

"Quiet!" roared Stoick. "Hiccup, I want you to get those troublemakers off this island now."

"Okay, we'll go," said Tuffnut. "But know this; our mother will miss us."

"Not you," Hiccup said exasperatedly. "The dragons."

"Oh." Tuffnut laughed. "You had me there for a minute, chief, 'cause we're also troublemakers."

"Dad, don't you think we would be better off training them?" Hiccup asked. "Think about it. They're fast, powerful."

"Destructive, loud, and out of control," Stoick finished.

"Uh, chief," said Tuffnut, "kinda making Hiccup's argument for him."

Gobber walked over to them. "The lad's got a point, Stoick. A squadron of Thunder Drums would be tough for Dagur and the Berserkers to defend against."

Stoick turned to Hiccup. "You really think you can get them under control, son?"

"I know we can," Hiccup insisted. "I mean, look how great Thornado turned out to be."

"Well," chuckled Stoick, "he is quite spectacular."

"We can do it, chief," said Fishlegs. "Please let us try."

"All right, fine," Stoick relented. "But at the first sign of trouble, they go. Thornado isn't their mother or a babysitter. He's got chieftain duties just like I do."

"Dad, you won't be sorry, I promise," said Hiccup. "I already have a whole plan laid out on how to train them."

Thornado flew away and so did the baby Thunder Drums.

"\*\*I can see this going wrong in so many ways,\*\*" Grim said to Deathshriek.

"\*\*You better tell the others this will not work,\*\*" Deathshriek said.

\* \* \*

><p>They managed to get the three Thunder Drums into the arena and they flew around roaring and singing. The riders had to cover their ears.<p>

"Okay! Now might be a good time to roll out that big plan of yours," Astrid shouted.

"Right! Right! Big plan," said Hiccup. "Uh, okay."

Astrid looked at him. "Let me guess: you have no plan."

"You're right," replied Hiccup. "That would be correct."

"Well, don't you think you better get one before our ears exploded?" yelled Snotlout.

The twins were sitting on a stack of barrels and heard.

"Wait! Our ears can actually explode?" called Tuffnut.

Ruffnut grabbed him and pulled him down to the purple Thunder Drum. "Let's see!"

"Explode! Explode!" chanted Tuffnut.

"Come on, don't encourage them," Hiccup said.

"The twins or the Thunder Drums?" asked Fishlegs.

"Neither," answered Astrid.

Grim and Deathshriek had wisely stayed back to observe. Grim looked over and saw Thornado watching.

"Thornado!" Stoick called. "Thornado, let's go!"

"\*\*He's watching,\*\*" Deathshriek said, noticing the larger dragon as well. "\*\*He feels like he should help them.\*\*"

"\*\*Do you know if Thornado was a father?\*\*" asked Grim.

"\*\*I honestly don't know,\*\*" replied Deathshriek.

They turned back to hear that the baby Thunder Drums had grown quiet.

"Dragon nip," Fishlegs said, taking a step back from them. "Old school, but effective."

The three dragons settled down into a daze.

"Great," said Hiccup. "But we can't have them laying around in a haze doing nothing all day."

"Yeah," Snotlout said, "that's what the twins are for."

"Whoa, whoa," said Tuffnut. "Don't judge. We already did something today."

"Yeah," said Ruffnut.

"What?" Snotlout asked. "What did you do?"

Ruffnut scoffed. "What did we do? What did we do?" she asked defensively. She turned to her twin. "What did we do?"

"We named them," Tuffnut answered.

Astrid crossed her arms and laughed. "Oh, this should be good."

"Oh, it is," said Ruffnut.

"Ready?" said Tuffnut. "Now, wait for it. Bing!" He pointed to the green Thunder Drum.

"Bam!" said Ruffnut, pointing to the blue.

"And Lloyd," Tuffnut finished, pointing to the purple. "You can thank us later."

Grim and Deathshriek both made a snorting noise of amusement. "\*\*\*They haven't noticed.\*\*"

Fishlegs glanced back at the other riders. "Call me crazy, but I'm thinking there might be a more logical choice than Lloyd."

"Like what?" asked Ruffnut.

"Uh, Boom?" Fishlegs answered.

"Oh, yeah," Tuffnut said sarcastically, "That could work. No way. How 'bout Darren?"

"Sorry, Lloyd," Ruffnut said.

"All right, now that's all taken care of, let's try some actual training," said Hiccup.

"Uh, voting is still open on the Lloyd thing though, right?" Tuffnut asked, his sister nodding hopefully. "Right?"

Hiccup rolled his eyes. "Oh, gah."

"Okay, just checking," said Tuffnut. "Darren's still on the table, right? No?"

Grim and Deathshriek stayed off to the side and watched as the riders unsuccessfully tried to train the Thunder Drums.

"\*\*This is a disaster,\*\*" Deathshriek said with a smirk. "\*\*But oddly amusing.\*\*"

Grim flinched as Snotlout got blasted into a wall. "\*\*Indeed, but I don't appreciate my brother being knocked around by baby dragons. And honestly, I would like to preserve my hearing so I can join you in singing on key.\*\*"

"\*\*You know there is only one way this is going to end well,\*\*" said Deathshriek. "\*\*They need a parent figure, one that is a Thunder Drum.\*\*"

"\*\*Where are we going to find another Thunder Drum willing to take them?\*\*" Grim asked. "\*\*They aren't rare, but they aren't very easy to find. And one we can trust to take care of three little ones is even more difficult to find.\*\*"

Deathshriek nodded in agreement.

The roaring, crying, shouting, and belching came to a sudden end. Grim and Deathshriek turned to Thornado. The three baby Thunder Drums lined up in front of him.

"Huh!" said Hiccup. "Will you look at that! Finally getting through to them. Well, someone is."

"\*\*It sounded like you need some help,\*\*" Thornado said.

"Okay, Thornado," Hiccup said. "How about a little follow the leader?"

Thornado flew up and did a lap around the arena with the three Thunder Drums following him.

"That was promising," Hiccup said. "Eh, bud?"

The four of them landed.

"I hardly recognize them," Astrid said.

Tuffnut gasped in horror. "What did you do? You've ruined them! Oh, Lloyd! I'm so sorry, Darren."

"It comes as no surprise," Grim said.

Hiccup turned to Grim. "Why haven't you stepped in? You can speak to them in their language."

"It's not about being able to speak to them," said Grim. "They need a parent and they know the majority of us aren't Thunder Drums. It is why they listen to Thornado. He is an adult and knows how to be assertive. And if I had to guess, he has had a clutch before." Grim turned to Thornado.

"\*\*Not my first hatchlings I've had to deal with,\*\*" Thornado replied. "\*\*I am not a young dragon.\*\*"

"\*\*You cannot be that old,\*\*" Grim said.

Thornado chuckled. "\*\*Flattery will only get you so far.\*\*"

"Thornado!" Stoick called, walking into the arena. "Thornado, come now. We have chiefting to do."

Thornado looked at the three baby Thunder Drums. He slowly walked over to Stoick.

Stoick looked at little dragons. "That's an improvement. Well done, Hiccup."

"Well, no, Dad," said Hiccup, but Stoick and Thornado were already leaving.

The three Thunder Drums bounced up and down chattering and flew for the exit.

"Oh, for the love of Thor!" cried Hiccup. "Tuffnut, the gate!"

"Got it!" Tuffnut ran over to the gate and pointed to it for the Thunder Drums.

Hiccup huffed angrily.

"What?" asked Tuffnut. "Okay, a little clarity next time would help."

Grim pinched the bridge of his nose as the other riders chased out after the baby Thunder Drums. "\*\*Deathshriek, let's go find Thornado. Stoick is not going to be happy about this.\*\*"

They did not have to fly far before they heard, "Hiccup!"

Grim and Deathshriek caught up with Hiccup and Toothless. The baby Thunder Drums were roaring, one of them doing so in Stoick's face.

"Do these dragons ever quiet down?" Stoick asked.

"Sure!" Fishlegs called, covering his ears. "Once they find their grown-up voice."

"And how long will that take?" Stoick asked.

"Shouldn't be more than a couple of years," Fishlegs replied.

The riders took off to try to wrangle the three baby Thunder Drums. Only Stoick and Grim stayed where they were.

"This is ridiculous!" cried Stoick. "They look like Gobber wrestling a greased yak." He turned to Grim. "Why aren't you down there helping them?"

"Because those Thunder Drums won't listen to us," Grim replied. "They will listen to Thornado though."

Stoick let out an exasperated sigh. Thornado cut them off and roared

loudly. However the damage was done. A few sheds had been destroyed along with a watchtower.

"Hiccup, remember how you said that I wouldn't be sorry?" Stoick asked calmly.

"This is outrageous!" yelled a Viking.

Hiccup put his head down. "Uh, yes."

"Well, I'm officially sorry," Stoick said. "You need to find those dragons a new home, son. The Thunder Drums have to go."

Hiccup looked dejectedly at the three baby Thunder Drums.

"Stoick, might I provide a suggestion?" Grim asked.

Stoick turned to Grim. "Now you have a suggestion? Why didn't you say anything before?"

"Because everyone was set on trying to train them," Grim replied. He walked over to the three baby dragons where they stood quietly, watching Grim. "Judging by their size and the way they are acting, they are not old enough to be left on their own. You cannot just leave them on another island. They will be easy prey for a much larger dragon. They need a parent."

"Thornado is not their mother," Stoick pointed out.

"No, but he is an adult Thunder Drum," Grim said. "For the moment, he is the only one who can look after them that they'll listen to."

"\*\*I can't look after them until they are old enough,\*\*" Thornado said. "\*\*I am needed here.\*\*"

"\*\*Thornado, I've seen how you look at them,\*\*" said Grim. "\*\*It will not be any trouble for you to look after them until a more permanent solution is found.\*\*"

Thornado hummed. "\*\*I think I have a more permanent solution. I know another Thunder Drum, an old friend. He may help us.\*\*"

"\*\*Do you know where he is now?\*\*" Deathshriek asked.

"\*\*His wing was injured when he came to Berk,\*\*" Thornado informed them. "\*\*I last saw him flying to Dragon Island.\*\*"

Grim nodded. "Thornado says he may know of another dragon who may help, a friend of his."

"Is it the Thunder Drum he was protecting when we first met him?" Hiccup asked.

"Yes," replied Grim.

"But how are we going to find it?" asked Hiccup.

"There are a few ways," said Grim.

"Maybe we should check Dragon Island first," Hiccup suggested. "If we can't find it there, we can search other islands to find it."

The riders and Stoick decided to fly out to Dragon Island together with the baby Thunder Drums.

"Well, Bing, Bam, and Boom," Hiccup said, "this could be your new home."

The baby Thunder Drums sniffed around the ground.

Grim looked around the area. "We should spread out and see if we can find any Thunder Drums. Stoick, you should stay here with the little ones. As small as they are, they can be easy targets for other dragons. I don't want them to get eaten."

"Eaten?" asked Ruffnut.

"Whoa, whoa," said Tuffnut. "They can be eaten?"

"Or easily killed," Grim added.

Fishlegs whimpered. "I don't want to see these little guys get eaten."

"As long as there's another dragon looking after them, they'll be fine," said Grim.

"Maybe we should give our dragon calls a try," Astrid suggested.

Hiccup turned to Thornado. "I think we have something better than our calls. Thornado?"

Thornado took a step back and roared loudly. It was a call for his friend. There was no true translation, but Grim discerned it as:   
"\*\*\*Friend, come here.\*\*\*"

Everyone was quiet as they listened for a reply. No reply came.

"I guess it's not around," said Astrid.

Stoick looked down at the three baby Thunder Drums. They were cuddling up to Thornado. He got off of Thornado and began fiddling with his saddle.

"Dad, are you okay?" Hiccup asked.

"Yes, son," said Stoick. "I think we all know what we need to do, don't we, Thornado?"

"\*\*\*For the time,\*\*" said Thornado.

Stoick took off Thornado's saddle.

"Stoick," Grim said.

"Dad, what are you doing?" Hiccup asked.

"I'm setting Thornado free," replied Stoick. "I do what any chief



would do in this situation. Or any father."

"We cannot give up," said Grim.

"I'm not giving up," said Stoick. "I'm doing what is best. They love Thornado. Maybe it's best if they stay with Thornado."

Thornado nuzzled the little ones.

"These boys won't survive without you," Stoick said to Thornado. "Right now they need you more than I do."

Fishlegs sniffled from on top of Meatlug.

"I'd do the same," Stoick continued. "But it doesn't mean I won't miss you."

"\*\*It will not be for long,\*\*" Thornado promised.

Stoick knelt down and put his hand on Thornado's nose and patted his jaw. "Take care of them, big fella."

"\*\*I'll miss you, too, Stoick,\*\*" said Thornado.

Stoick got up and climbed on Toothless' back with Hiccup. The riders flew away.

"Hey, Dad," said Hiccup. "You did the right thing."

Stoick turned around to look back at the Thunder Drums. "Goodbye, old friend."

"\*\*Goodbye!\*\*" roared Thornado.

Grim looked over at Stoick. "You did what I could not."

Stoick turned to Grim. "I think if you had a choice, you would do the same, Grim."

"I am not strong enough," said Grim. "But those little ones will have a chance at life." Grim chuckled a little.

"What's so funny?" Hiccup asked.

"I wonder if I should tell the twins that their Lloyd is actually a Lydia," Grim said.

"Lloyd is a Lydia?" Fishlegs repeated, puzzled. Then it clicked in his head. "Boom's a girl!"

Deathshriek laughed like it was the funniest thing he ever heard of.

\* \* \*

><p><strong>I thought it would be funny if one of the baby Thunder Drums was a girl and thought "What if 'Lloyd' was a girl instead of a boy?" Originally I wasn't going to have Thornado leave Berk and that his Thunder Drum friend was going to take care of Bing, Bam, and Boom. Then I thought about how I was going to work the season finale

with Thornado in it and decided against it. Rather have Grim be the voice of reason and not have the babies threatened to be eaten. Last two chapters will be the season finale. Hopefully it won't be as long as a wait. I want to post the last chapter and the first chapter of next installment on the same day so you don't have to wait for the next installment.<strong>

## 19. Chapter 19

**\*\*I'm back! I don't know how often I'll be posting. I've been working on the new installment of Dragon Trainer, Dragon Speaker and hopefully the first chapter will be posted this week. Which means this installment will come to a close in the very near future. After this, there is only one more chapter. I know I've been keeping you waiting, so I'm going to shut up and let you read. Hopefully this makes up for my long stay away.\*\***

\* \* \*

><p>It was supposed to be a training exercise to know what to do during an ambush. Gobber and some other Vikings were on the ground firing the catapults while the riders were to dodge and escape.<p>

Ruffnut nearly had her head taken off by a boulder.

"Fall back, everyone!" Hiccup ordered. "There's too many of them."

Everyone turned around, except for Snotlout.

"You fall back!" Snotlout yelled. "I'm going in to finish this."

"Snotlout, that is not the exercise!" Hiccup shouted back. "Retreat!"

Instead, Snotlout steered Hookfang down with a whoop. "I got your retreat right here."

Hookfang flipped around in the air and fired at one of the catapults. That particular catapult was loaded and fired aimlessly. While Snotlout leaned back in his saddle comfortably whistling, the boulder flew over Hookfang's wing. Hiccup happened to look behind and had Toothless barrel roll to avoid being hit.

The boulder continued on and nearly hit Astrid. She fell off Stormfly and plummeted to the ground.

"Astrid!" screamed Hiccup.

Both Toothless and Deathshriek went diving for the screaming girl. She clipped a few branches before Hiccup pulled her onto Toothless feet from the ground.

Toothless and Deathshriek landed.

Grim jumped off Deathshriek and ran over to Toothless. "Be gentle," he said to Hiccup. "We do not know what is broken." There was the

hint of an Irish accent in his voice.

Hiccup and Grim got Astrid lowered to the ground. Grim took off his shirt and used it as a pillow for Astrid's head.

Stormfly, Barf and Belch, and Meatlug landed.

"\*\*Is she okay?\*\*" Stormfly cried.

"\*\*We do not know yet,\*\*" Deathshriek said. "\*\*We just got her on the ground.\*\*"

"Astrid," Hiccup called.

"Is she okay?" Fishlegs asked.

Grim put his hand up for silence. He brought his ear to her chest. Astrid was breathing, but the shock of everything had knocked her out. "She lives." Grim continued to check her over. She had a nasty scratch on her arm and he was certain her ribs had caught a branch.

"How hard did she hit?" Ruffnut asked.

"Hard enough," Hiccup said.

"Whoa," breathed Tuffnut.

Astrid moaned and opened her eyes. "What happened?" She started to sit up.

Grim put her hands on her shoulders. "No, stay down. Take a few moments. You fell."

Snotlout flew around, whooping with laughter. Hookfang landed.

"Yeah!" Snotlout said, jumping off Hookfang. "That's how Snotlout retreats. He doesn't. Click, click, boom! Ha-ha!"

Everyone else was glaring at him, except for Astrid, who Grim was helping to sit up.

"What?" asked Snotlout. "Why are you all looking at me? Listen, I know why you're all looking at me." He flexed his muscles. He saw they were not impressed. "What? It's Hiccup's stupid exercise."

Hiccup opened his mouth to yell, but Grim put his hand up. "Silence, brother." Grim slowly got to his feet and made a motion to Fishlegs that Fishlegs interpreted as to help Astrid.

The others stared at Grim. They never saw the dragon speaker so angry, except for Hiccup when they learned Mildew betrayed them.

"Do you know what you did?" Grim asked calmly.

"Uh, yeah," Snotlout said. "Hookfang and I made the coolest trick shot ever."

"\*\*Did you see it?\*\*" asked Hookfang.

"Be silent!" clipped Grim. His voice went dangerously calm again. "You truly do not know what happened, do you? Your little stunt nearly killed Astrid."

Snotlout crossed his arms. "Come on. She's fine. Look at her."

Hiccup and Fishlegs were helping Astrid to her feet. She was doubled over, holding her right side.

"No thanks to you," she groaned. Astrid straightened up and got ready to charge Snotlout.

Grim put his hand up to Astrid, without looking at Astrid. "Fishlegs, take Astrid to Gothi."

"I'm fine, Grim," said Astrid.

"Now," Grim said with no room for argument. "And ride with Fishlegs. We do not know how injured you are."

"Come on, Astrid," Fishlegs whispered to her. "I don't think Grim is leaving this open for debate."

Fishlegs helped Astrid up on Meatlug and Meatlug and Stormfly took off for the village.

Hiccup was shaking now. "That's it! I'm tired of this!" He stormed up to Snotlout.

"I'm tired of this!" snapped Snotlout. His fire went out and confusion took over. "What are you tired of?"

"You always have to do things your way," Hiccup said.

"Yeah, well, guess what? I look out for Number 1," Snotlout said, jabbing his thumb at himself.

Hookfang let out a roar and fired over their heads.

"And 1A," Snotlout added, pointing to Hookfang.

"Exactly," said Hiccup. "How can we rely on you if you don't do what we ask?"

"So, what are you saying, Hiccup?" sneered Snotlout.

"I'm saying, until further notice, you're suspended from the Academy," Hiccup replied.

"What?" cried Snotlout.

"Wow," said the twins.

"You're grounded," Hiccup said, crossing his arms.

Snotlout poked Hiccup in the chest. "You can't ground me. You're not my dad."

"Yes, I can," Hiccup said, poking Snotlout back.

"Oh, really?" he challenged. Snotlout was quiet for a second.

"Watch!" He started over to Hookfang.

Grim pounced on Snotlout and pinned him down by the throat. "We can do this like the dragons do. Do you know what happens to dragons who defy the alpha like you are doing?"

"Grim," Hiccup called.

Snotlout pushed Grim off and jumped up on Hookfang. "Ground this, dragon boys!"

Hookfang took off.

"Uh, am I wrong in thinking grounded means staying on the ground?" asked Tuffnut. "Because that looks an awful lot like skying." Tuffnut gave his arms a flap.

Grim picked up his shirt and mounted Deathshriek.

"Grim?" Hiccup asked. "Was that necessary?"

Grim turned to Hiccup. "What would you have me do?"

Hiccup got on Toothless and the twins followed them back.

They went straight to Gothi's to see how Astrid was. Gothi had wrapped her ribs and bandaged the scratch on her arm. They told her what happened after they were set back to the village.

"You didn't have to do that for me, Hiccup," Astrid said.

Hiccup sighed. "If we can't count on Snotlout during practice, how can we possibly count on him the next time we run into Dagur?"

"I did not wish to do it either, but it had to be done," said Grim. "Right now, Astrid, you focus on getting better. With one of our riders being disobedient, we cannot have you down for long."

\* \* \*

><p>Later in the day, Hiccup and Toothless went to the Academy. The twins and Astrid were there. Astrid was tending to Stormfly while Barf and Belch were watching what their riders were doing. The twins were doing something in one of the pens.<p>

"Let me guess; Snotlout is out flying," Hiccup said.

"You didn't hear it from us," said Tuffnut.

Hiccup dismounted Toothless. "And what are you two doing?"

"Well, we figured with Snotlout kicked out of the Academy," Tuffnut explained, "our pen next to his, we'd knock down a wall, create kind of a better flow, and some feng shui, obviously in memory of Snotlout. He will be forgotten. No, sorry, he will not be forgotten."

"Whoa, whoa, whoa, I didn't kick him out of the Academy," said Hiccup. "He's just on temporary suspension."

"Well, what choice do you have?" asked Tuffnut. "After his flagrant disregard of your leadership. I mean he deserves to have his pen merged with another pen."

"Yeah, the only remaining choice is total expulsion," Ruffnut added. "Or you run the risk of losing the respect of the other riders."

"Wow, they actually have a point," said Astrid.

Ruffnut went back into the pen. "And we're not just saying that because we plan on putting curtains right here." She pointed out a spot on the wall.

Tuffnut held up a swatch of purple fabric. "I'm good with fabrics. Who knew? I also do some needlepoint."

Hiccup snatched the fabric from Tuffnut. "No one is knocking down anything. I will talk to Snotlout when he comes back."

\* \* \*

><p>Hiccup came home and found Stoick sitting on his chair with a block of ice pressed to his head.<p>

"Tough day, Dad?" asked Hiccup.

"Aye," replied Stoick. "Some days it's not so easy being a leader."

"Ugh, tell me about it," said Hiccup. "Think I may have a little situation with Snotlout."

Stoick picked up a smaller block of ice and handed it to Hiccup. "And what's he done now?"

"He disobeyed a direct order," replied Hiccup, putting the ice to his head. "So I grounded him. And now he's refusing to obey that order. I don't know what to do. Do I expel him from the Academy for good?"

"Is that what you really want?" Stoick asked, getting up and putting the ice aside.

"No." Hiccup handed his piece back. "But I also don't want to put the other riders at risk."

"He almost killed Astrid today," Grim said, showing up in the room with no warning.

Hiccup jumped.

Stoick hummed. "Tough one. Decisions like this are never easy. I made more than a few in my day."

"Then how do you do it?" asked Hiccup. "How can you be someone's

leader and still be their friend?"

"You can't," Stoick replied. "Not always. Son, someday you will be chief and when that day comes, you'll have to make choices, not for your friends or yourself, but all of Berk."

Stoick left the house.

Hiccup turned to Grim. "I don't think I ever want to be chief."

"I do not envy you," Grim said.

"What do you think I should do?" Hiccup asked.

"Personally, I would have expelled him," said Grim. "I wouldn't take Hookfang from him. I know how it feels to be separated from your friend."

Stoick came back. "Hiccup, Grim, something has happened."

Hiccup and Grim followed Stoick outside. There was a crowd gathered in the square.

"Okay! Okay! What's going on here?" Stoick called, pushing through the crowd. "Who is -?"

They saw Snotlout sitting up. "I captured him," he slurred. He fell back again.

"\*\*Snotlout!\*\*" Hookfang gasped.

Standing over Snotlout was a massive Viking.

"Alvin?" gasped Hiccup.

"Alvin?" growled Stoick.

"Alvin," snarled Grim.

It only took a few minutes to put Alvin in shackles and drag him up to the great hall.

"Alvin the Treacherous," Gobber said, reading from a piece of paper, "you are hereby charged with the following crimes: treachery, attempted treachery, premeditated treachery, conspiracy to commit treachery, and â€" well, you get the idea!"

The crowd was in an uproar.

"Quiet, everyone." Stoick put his hands up for silence. "Alvin the Treacherous, you will be remanded to our jail until a proper sentence can be handed down."

"Is this 'ow you treat a man 'o saved a valuable life?" Alvin asked.

"Valuable?" asked Tuffnut.

"Snotlout?" asked Ruffnut.

"I know you, Alvin," said Stoick. "You didn't do this for Snotlout. You did it for yourself."

"What could I possibly 'ave to gain from comin' 'ere?" Alvin asked. "I did it for us both, Stoick. I 'ave a proposition for you."

"Not interested," Stoick said. He turned away. "That's it, everyone. Go home."

They took Alvin away.

Astrid and Fishlegs came running.

"Hiccup, Grim," called Astrid. "Snotlout just woke up. And apparently Alvin wasn't the only nasty creature on that island."

"The Screaming Death," said Fishlegs. "It's closing in on Berk."

"Well, that's fantastic news," said Hiccup. "Come on!"

\* \* \*

><p>They went to the Academy and flew around on their dragons, trying to come up with ideas. Toothless, Deathshriek, Stormfly, and Meatlug flew around in a circle while firing. The twins were in the pen redecorating.<p>

"Come on, guys," said Hiccup. "Focus. We need to figure out a way to stop the Screaming Death from reaching Berk."

Hookfang flew in and knocked Meatlug out of the air.

"Hey, everyone, did you miss me? Of course you did," said Snotlout. "Why do I even ask?"

The others landed and turned to Snotlout. They were vaguely aware of the twins having a fit about Snotlout being back.

"Snotlout, I'm very happy you're okay," Hiccup started.

"Oh, me? I'm more than okay," Snotlout said, coming to stand beside Astrid.

"You broke the rules again and you almost got yourself killed in the process," Hiccup continued.

"So?" Snotlout crossed his arms.

"So you're still suspended," Hiccup answered.

"What?" cried Snotlout. He advanced on Hiccup. "I found the Screaming Death and I captured Alvin the Treacherous."

Grim snapped. "Enough with your delusions of grandeur, you selfish brat."

That made Snotlout angry. "Who are you calling a selfish brat, you Celtic reject?"



"You did not just go there," said Astrid.

Grim snarled. "I thought we did not allow \_children\_to fly dragons."

"Look, nothing's changed," Hiccup jumped in before blows were exchanged. "You're still suspended. I'm sorry. Come on, Hookfang."

Hiccup penned Hookfang, ignoring the fact Tuffnut was still in the pen with him.

"You can't do this," Snotlout yelled.

Grim gave him an icy glare. "He just did."

\* \* \*

><p>In the evening, Hiccup and Grim went over to the jail with their dragons. There was an angry mob outside of the jail, but they were able to easily pass inside.<p>

"Astrid said you wanted to see us," Hiccup said.

Alvin chuckled from his place on the bench.

"What do you want, Alvin?" Hiccup asked.

"I 'ave a proposal for you, 'Iccup," Alvin said, getting up.

"Oh, this should be good," said Hiccup.

Alvin came over to the door. The dragons growled low and bared their teeth. Hiccup and Grim made motions to their dragons to back away.

"This Dagur, 'e's a bit of a loose catapult, wouldn't you say?" Alvin said.

"That is putting it mildly," Grim said.

"Well, 'e force me off me own island, and I want it back," said Alvin.

"What, so you can get back to the business of destroying our island?" asked Hiccup.

"Oh, 'Iccup, I was upset," said Alvin.

"For twenty years?" said Hiccup.

Alvin put both hands on the bars. "Very upset," he growled. "You know, losin' everything tends to make a man see things differently."

"So you're saying you changed?" Hiccup asked, crossing his arms.

"I'm sayin' I'm tryin' to," Alvin said.

Hiccup turned away.

"\*\*Lying, slithering eel,\*\*" Toothless growled.

"Let us say we accept your proposal," said Grim. "What is in it for Berk?"

"The Berserkers gone and the Outcasts your allies," Alvin answered.

They left without a word.

\* \* \*

><p>No one said a word at the dinner table that night.<p>

Stoick finally had enough. "All right, spit it out, you two. Hiccup, you've been staring at me all night. And Grim, you have that look that tells me you are thinking about something."

"What exactly did Alvin do to get cast out?" Hiccup blurted.

"I don't want to discuss it," said Stoick.

"But where did it all start? I mean -."

Stoick thumped his fist on the table. "It doesn't matter where it started," he said. "Just where it ended."

"Yes, but I just want to know, I â€" I need to know," said Hiccup.

Stoick stood up. "All you need to know is that Alvin is our enemy and that will never change." He left the room.

Toothless warbled from his place near the fire.

"It does matter."

Hiccup turned to Grim.

"It matters so the same mistakes are not made again," Grim whispered.

\* \* \*

><p>The blast of the horn woke the village.<p>

Hiccup sat up. "Warning signal," he said. He turned to Grim.

Grim was out of bed, pulling on his dragon claw gloves. Fearcloak jumped onto his back.

"Come on, bud!" Hiccup ran down the stairs. He grabbed his shield from where he left it on the stairs and out the door with Grim and the dragons behind him.

The first place they went was to the arena. They looked down and saw Hookfang, Stormfly, Barf and Belch out of their pens, fighting over something in the middle of the arena.

"Dragon root!" Hiccup told Grim.

They joined the other riders on the ground.

"Dagur put dragon root in the arena so the dragons will attack each other," Hiccup quickly informed them.

Snotlout ran up to them. "Hiccup, listen, I need to tell you something."

"Not now, Snotlout," said Hiccup.

"It's important," Snotlout insisted.

"Not now, Snotlout!" Hiccup said a little more forcefully. "All right, Fishlegs, it's all you. Toothless and Deathshriek can't go in there or they'll be effected by the root. You and Meatlug have to fly in there and get that root while the others distract their dragons."

"You hear that girl?" said Fishlegs. "It's up to you and me."

"\*\*I'm ready,\*\*" said Meatlug. She gave him a lick.

"I think I may be able to get a little help," Grim said. He cupped his hands together. "\*\*Invaders! Invaders!\*\*"

Grim opened the door and let them in. They began trying to get their dragons under control for Meatlug to get the root. It was complete chaos in the arena, but Meatlug managed to grab the root.

Grim was knocked from his place at the lever to the door. He hit the ground and rolled over. A Berserker held a spear at his throat. The door slammed shut, locking everyone inside.

Toothless landed.

"Open that door right now," Hiccup ordered. "Or -."

"Or what?" On the platform around the top of the arena was Dagur. He and Savage were standing there. Two Berserkers were up there with them with crossbows pointed at them. More Berserkers surrounded the arena and aimed their weapons at Hiccup, Toothless, and Grim.

At the back of his mind, Hiccup wondered where Deathshriek was. But he had to focus on what was in front of him. "Dagur, what do you want?"

"What I've always wanted," said Dagur. "The Night Fury. Hand him over and we leave peacefully. That's your choice. Your dragon or your friends. Isn't this exciting? What will he choose, ladies and gentlemen?"

Hiccup could see his friends weren't going to last long in the arena.

Dagur smirked. "So, Hiccup, what's your answer?"

"The answer is we run you threw and open the door ourselves." Stoick

stood with his hammer and shield and a group of Vikings behind him. There was a battle cry from every one of them.

Grim smirked from where lay. "\*\*\*Get him.\*\*"

Fearcloak reached around and lunged at the Berserker, biting his arm. He let out of a yell of pain. Grim took the opportunity to deliver a punch to his face.

Berkians and Berserkers began fighting. Stoick went for the chain that controlled the door.

"Savage!" Alvin rammed through a group of Berserkers. "Duck!" he yelled to Stoick.

Stoick jumped as Savage jumped to attack from above. Alvin ran up, launched himself into the air, and planted both boots into his former second-in-command.

Dagur was furious. "You!"

"Me," said Alvin. "An' don' look so surprised. I don't go down so easily."

Stoick picked up a sword. "Alvin!" He threw the sword to Alvin.

Alvin caught the sword and stared at Stoick.

"Well, don't just stand there!" Stoick barked.

Alvin smiled and struck an attacking Berserker coming up behind him without even looking. He joined the battle for the Berkians.

Stoick opened the door.

Hiccup and Toothless zoomed in.

"Fishlegs, this way!" Hiccup called. "We'll cover you."

"Come on, girl, you can do this," Fishlegs urged Meatlug.

Toothless kept the other dragons from following.

Meatlug flew out at top speed, knocking Stoick over.

"Sorry, chief!" Fishlegs called.

There were three roars, one was Deathshriek's and the other two belonged to Axewing and Grindheart. Grindheart started firing his spines the moment he was in range. Axewing breathed fire at the Berserkers.

"\*\*Glad you could make it!\*\*" Grim called, slashed with his claws.

"\*\*Like we were going to miss this,\*\*" hissed Grindheart. The Whispering Death liked a good fight.

With the three dragons entering the fight, the other riders decided

to check on their dragons. Hiccup and Toothless went down there as well to see that everyone was okay. The other dragons had snapped out of their dragon root induced rage.

"Hiccup!" Gobber yelled.

Hiccup flew Toothless over to where Gobber was.

Savage and Dagur were at the top of the steps leading away from the arena. Both of them were holding swords to Stoick's throat.

"Dad!" cried Hiccup.

"Stoick!" Grim looked ready to kill. "Dagur, you have gone too far."

"Nobody make a move," Dagur said.

Toothless snarled.

"Dagur," growled Alvin.

"We'll be leaving now," said Dagur, carelessly waving his sword. "And if I see one dragon following us, rider or not, you're going to looking for a new chief." He laughed maniacally. "We'll be in touch. Bye-bye."

And they left.

Toothless turned around and snarled.

Hiccup quickly came up with a plan. "Okay, we take the south pass, cut them off at the beach, and smash their boats before they even -."

"Don't do it, boy," Alvin warned. "You back a man like that into a corner, you may not like the outcome."

"Especially when that man travels with a hundred ship armada," Gobber added.

"But I have to save my father," Hiccup said.

"Dagur is not gonna hurt your father," said Alvin. "Yet. Stoick is not what 'e wants."

"He's right," said Gobber.

Hiccup turned to Gobber. "You want me to trust him?" He motioned to Alvin.

"If there's one thing Alvin knows, Hiccup, it's treachery," Gobber said.

Hiccup didn't like the idea, but he had no other option at the moment. He turned to see if Grim could give any advice or comfort, but he wasn't there.

"Where's Grim?" Hiccup asked.

Deathshriek and Grim had raced out to the beach invisibly. They beat the Berserkers to their boats. Deathshriek stayed invisible, both remembering Dagur's warning. They waited for the Berserkers to return.

"Dagur!" Grim shouted down from the cliff.

They turned around.

Stoick stared up at Grim, wondering what he was doing.

"What do you want?" Dagur yelled back up.

"It may not be the Night Fury, but I have something for you," said Grim.

Dagur chuckled. "This should be good. What is it?"

Grim pointed his finger directly at Dagur. "If you harm Stoick, or any of my kin, human or dragon, no plan of yours will come to fruition. You will lose what you have worked so hard for. What sins you have committed will return to haunt you. And when that happens, I will be there to watch you fall."

Grim became invisible. He could hear the startled Berserkers below. **"\*\*Deathshriek, follow them and see if they return to Outcast Island. If they do not, follow them wherever they are going. Report back to me when they reach their destination. Do not be seen.\*\*"**

**"\*\*Understood,\*\*"** Deathshriek said.

Grim felt Deathshriek take off. He walked back to the village. He found that Alvin had been jailed in Hookfang's pen for the time being. He found Hiccup and Toothless standing on a cliff, looking at the ocean.

"Don't worry, Dad," Hiccup said. "We're gonna get you back no matter what it takes."

"Let's go home and get some sleep," Grim said. "We will be no use to Stoick if we are asleep on our feet."

Hiccup reluctantly turned away the two of them flew back on Toothless.

\* \* \*

><p><strong>Yeah, I threw a little of the Color Purple into that at the end, but I needed something. Did you really think Grim was just going to stand by and let this all happen without him putting in his two cents? We have one more chapter to go, the season finale of Defenders of Berk.<strong>

**\*\*On a slightly different note, after the next installment is done with Deltora, I might not be moving to the second movie right away. I am on the fence of another installment that covers the five years between the Season 2 finale and the second movie. Thoughts on this? You can leave your thoughts and your reviews in the review box. I do need a little input and I hope everything goes out and starts off**

with a bang.\*\*

## 20. Chapter 20

\*\*It's been a while and I know you've all been waiting for this installment to end and another one to begin. Today's the day. This is the last chapter for the Dragon Brothers story and the Defenders of Berk arc. Go ahead and leave your comments in the review section and check out the note I leave for you at the end of this chapter for more details of the next installment.\*\*

\* \* \*

><p>The morning did not prove any better. Hiccup, Grim, Astrid arrived to an angry crowd with Gobber trying to restore some order. They found the twins at the back of the crowd yelling along with them.<p>

"What is going on?" Hiccup asked them.

"I have no idea," said Tuffnut. "But everyone's shouting and I am totally into that."

The twins went back to shouting.

"We're so angry!" Ruffnut yelled.

"Everybody, shake your fists up to the sky!" Tuffnut added.

"Really not helping, Tuff," said Hiccup.

Grim adjusted the ragged black cloak he was wearing. "This is bad," he murmured.

Gobber pushed his way over to Hiccup and Grim. "Settle down! Hiccup will answer all your questions." Gobber dragged Hiccup to the front, Grim following close behind.

"Why him?" asked Snotlout.

"He's the acting chief," Gobber replied. "That's why." He leaned over to Hiccup. "They're all yours."

"Great," said Hiccup.

"What are we gonna do?"

"Where's Stoick?"

"When can we start yelling again?" Tuffnut called from the back.

"Good questions," said Hiccup. "Mostly. As you all know, Berk is no stranger to hard times. But the best thing is to -."

"Take arms!"

"Man the catapults!"

Grim put a hand on Hiccup's shoulder. "Stand back." Grim stepped forward. "Silence!" His cloak opened up to reveal it was actually a pair of wings.

The crowd fell silent.

"Okay, good," said Hiccup. "Where were we?"

Astrid felt it was a good time to jump in. "You were about to tell them that they have nothing to worry about and that you have everything under control."

"All right, people, you have nothing to worry about and everything is under control," Hiccup repeated.

There was silence before the uproar started again.

"That went much better in my head," Astrid apologized.

They managed to slip out. Hiccup and Grim went home. Fearcloak hopped down from Grim's back and said hello to Toothless. The little dragon had his fun scaring the Vikings when Grim yelled and now was ready to see what he could do to help.

"For your first public speech, you did well," Grim said.

"I don't see how," Hiccup said. "You probably would have done a better job. You had them wrapped around your finger when you told them to be quiet."

"I had a little help," Grim said, looking at Fearcloak.

"You were taught to speak in public," said Hiccup.

"But I wasn't always very good at it," Grim confided. "During my first public speech, I threw up."

"Really?" asked Hiccup.

Grim nodded. "Have a little faith."

Hiccup looked over at his father's axe on the table. He picked it up.

The door opened and Gobber came in. "You know, Hiccup, there's nothing easy about chiefting. You should have seen Stoick when he first took over." Gobber walked over to a pot sitting over the fire and pulled a fish out with his hook for Toothless. "He was like a newborn yak trying to find his feet."

"I find that hard to believe," said Hiccup.

"It's true," said Gobber. "In fact, there were some in this town who didn't think he had it in him. Alvin, for one. He wouldn't shut up about it. Hiccup, being chief doesn't mean everyone is going to agree with you. Sometimes you have to deal with the Alvin and Snotlouts of the world."

Hiccup plopped down in his father's chair. "I feel like that's all I do."



"They were best friends, you know," said Gobber.

"Who?" asked Hiccup.

"Alvin and Stoick. They were inseparable since birth."

"So what happened?" asked Hiccup. "What changed?"

"Everything," replied Gobber.

Before Hiccup or Grim could ask anything more, they heard, "Hiccup! Hiccup! Grim!" Fishlegs burst through the door completely out of breath. "Hiccup. . .Screaming. . .Coming. . ." He fell to his knees.

"Whoa, whoa, whoa, whoa!" Hiccup jumped up from his seat. "Take a breath there, Fishlegs."

Grim and Hiccup came over to Fishlegs, who managed to get himself on his feet again.

"I was on patrol with Meatlug," Fishlegs started. "The Screaming Death: we saw it!" He grabbed Hiccup's shoulders. "It's eating its way to Berk."

Hiccup raced out of the house with the others behind him. He stopped at the edge of the hill so he could see out over the water. "How much time do we have?"

"Not much," Fishlegs replied. "It was just off Dragon Island when we saw it."

Stormfly landed by them.

Astrid got off, holding a scroll. She ran over to Hiccup and handed it to him. "This came for you. It's from Dagur."

Hiccup took off the leather holding the scroll shut. "And the hits just keep on coming."

"Well, what does it say?" asked Astrid.

Grim read over Hiccup's shoulder. "We have until tonight to deliver Toothless or Stoick will be executed."

"It's a trap," said Astrid. "You know that. If we fly anywhere near Outcast Island. . ."

"Not all of us," said Grim.

"You guys get Snotlout and the twins," said Hiccup. "You tell them to be ready for the Screaming Death."

"What about your father?" asked Astrid.

"I'll handle that," said Hiccup.

"Not without me," said Grim. "He is my father, too."

"Okay," said Astrid. "Come on, Fishlegs."

As they were walking down to the Academy, Deathshriek returned.

"Where have you been?" Hiccup asked.

"\*\*They took him to Outcast Island,\*\*" Deathshriek reported to Grim. "\*\*They have him locked in their kill ring the last I saw him. They doubled the guard and watchmen. You and I will be the only ones who can slip through.\*\*"

"\*\*You went to Outcast Island?\*\*" Toothless cried.

"\*\*I followed them the entire way there,\*\*" Deathshriek said. "\*\*They cannot see me while I'm invisible.\*\*"

"Thank you, Deathshriek," Girm said. "I had Deathshriek follow them to make sure there were no tricks. Stoick is fine from what Deathshriek tells me."

Hiccup turned to the blue and black dragon. "Thanks, Deathshriek." He put his hand on his nose.

Deathshriek purred.

As they continued to the Academy, Deathshriek whispered, "\*\*They keep talking about the demon boy.\*\*" He chuckled. "\*\*You left a lasting impression with that trick.\*\*"

"\*\*I meant every word,\*\*" said Grim.

They went to the Academy where Alvin was locked up.

"So 'ow that town meetin' go?" Alvin asked. "Sounds like you 'ad them in the palm of your 'and."

"Never mind that, Alvin," said Hiccup. He opened the door.

Toothless gave him a warning snarl.

Alvin stepped out, shielding his eyes from the sun. "Well, this is awkward. Do I stay? Do I go?"

"Both," replied Hiccup. "You're going to show us a way into Outcast Island. We're going there together. Alvin, we're going to bring my father home."

Alvin grinned.

\* \* \*

><p>Twenty minutes later, Toothless and Deathshriek were flying to Outcast Island with Toothless carrying Alvin as well. Alvin looked down and saw the water passing quickly beneath him. He grabbed onto Hiccup hard.<p>

"You mind loosening up that death grip a little bit?" Hiccup winced.

"Sorry," Alvin said. "They all tend to be death grips."

Toothless brought his wings up in an exaggerated flap and hit Alvin in the head. He laughed at Alvin's pain.

"Toothless, no," Hiccup scolded. He leaned down and patted Toothless on the head. "So, word on the street is you and my father used to be best friends."

Alvin laughed humorlessly. "Yeah, that was a long time ago."

"So, what changed?" asked Hiccup.

"Your father and I were young Vikings charged with defending Berk from dragon attacks," said Alvin. "Stoick was the chief's son so 'e was in command. I was just a soldier. Sound familiar?"

"It does," said Hiccup. "Sounds like me and Snotlout."

"Well, anyway, there was a Monsterous Nightmare attack one night," Alvin continued. "Your father and I disagreed on 'ow to defend the village. I disobeyed orders and, uh, there were a few, eh, injuries. Things were never the same after that. When Stoick became chief, it was only a matter of time before 'e banished me."

"And you didn't try to make amends?" Grim asked.

"It's not that easy, boy," said Alvin.

"It cannot be any worse than what happened to me," Grim said.

"And what 'appened to you?" Alvin asked.

"They killed my best friend and banished me because of my best friend," said Grim.

Alvin raised his eyebrows. "You got banished for something your friend did?"

"The only thing my friend was guilty of was being a dragon," Grim said bitterly.

Alvin hummed. "I can see 'ow things might 'ave gone sideways for you there."

They looked ahead and saw the steep cliff of Outcast Island.

"Well, on that cheery note, we've arrived," Hiccup said.

"Let's get on with it," said Alvin.

Toothless and Deathshriek stopped before they reached shore.

"We cannot fly over the island," said Grim. "They are expecting us."

"I'm well aware of that," said Alvin. "We're not flyin' over the island, we're flyin' under it. 'Old your breath."

Alvin pushed hard on the pedal and Toothless fought to stay in the

air.

"Alvin, what are you doing?" yelled Hiccup.

"Dive, dragon, dive!" Alvin ordered.

"No, Toothless," said Hiccup, getting control of the tailfin.

"I thought you were goin' to trust me," said Alvin. "Moment of truth, boy."

"\*\*Hiccup,\*\*" warbled Toothless.

"Do it, bud," said Hiccup.

"\*\*What?\*\*" cried Toothless.

"Just do it," Hiccup told him.

Both dragons plunged under the water. Alvin pointed out a cave to them. They swam threw and surfaced in a cavern.

Alvin got out of the water and pointed to a tunnel. "That tunnel will take us directly to the 'eart of the island."

"Wait," said Hiccup. "How do you know Dagur hasn't found this tunnel?"

"Because I got a man on the inside 'o assures me that it's clean," Alvin replied.

They followed Alvin up the tunnel and into where the captured dragons were kept. An old man with a staff was trying to feed a Whispering Death without getting eaten himself.

"Mildew?" Hiccup cried in surprise. "This traitor is your man on the inside?"

Toothless growled low with a nasty dragon insult passing through his teeth.

"Well, 'e's always been faithful to me," Alvin defended, getting between Mildew and Toothless.

"Oh, well, there's that warm fuzzy feeling I was looking for," Hiccup sniped.

Mildew was still having trouble with the Whispering Death he was trying to feed.

"Mildew, have to say I never thought I'd see the day you'd be playing nanny to a nursery of dragons," Hiccup said.

"Interesting turn of events to say the least," Mildew replied. The Whispering Death bit Mildew's staff and tried to eat it. "Give me!" He wrestled it back.

"Hiccup," said Grim.

Hiccup turned to see Grim at the cage opposite Mildew. Inside was a

sleeping Whispering Death surrounded by eggs.

"So this is where all those Whispering Death eggs you planted came from," Hiccup said.

"'Is idea," Alvin said, motioning to Mildew. "And not a very good one at that."

"So this Whispering Death laid all the eggs?" Hiccup asked Mildew.

"Every one," replied Mildew.

"Which would include a large, red egg?" Hiccup inquired.

"Odd, that one," Mildew said. "I was wondering about it. How did it turn out?"

"Eh, big," replied Hiccup.

"A Whispering Death only lays one egg like that every century," said Grim. "They do not hatch into normal Whispering Deaths. It is a Screaming Death, a devourer of islands, eating their foundations until they sink."

Hiccup took one more look at the sleeping dragon before going to Toothless, scribbling something on a scrap of paper. He took a Terror from his saddlebag.

"What are you doin'?" Alvin asked.

"Sending a message home," Hiccup replied. "That Screaming Death has been searching for something all this time. Now it's head for Berk and I think I may know what it's looking for."

"I see where this is leading," Grim said. "Would you rather I fly back on Deathshriek? We could make better time."

"No, I need you here," Hiccup replied. "You're the only one who can speak Dragonese."

"All right, 'ere's our plan," said Alvin.

"No offence there, Alvin, but your plans are terrible," said Hiccup. "Here's what we need to do."

\* \* \*

><p>After telling everyone the plan, Hiccup and Toothless released the Terror outside by the arena.<p>

"Okay, bud, it's show time." Hiccup jumped onto the saddle, his shield in hand.

Toothless began bounding behind boulders and taking out Berserkers with plasma blasts. They entered the arena once all the guards were knocked out.

A bola came flying in Hiccup's direction. He deflected it with his shield. They began coming from all sides. Hiccup let them bounce of

his shield while Toothless jumped out of the way.

Hiccup heard a click. He glanced up and yelled, "Toothless, look out!"

A cage fell from above and trapped Toothless. He butted against it and hit it with plasma blasts, but the cage was too strong.

Hiccup was surrounded by Berserkers with swords.

Toothless was roaring angrily. "\*\*\*Get away from him!\*" He slammed his head against the cage.

Savage walked over to the cage. "Welcome back to Outcast Island, Hiccup."

Dagur walked over to the cage. "You're finally mine. All mine. First thing we're gonna do is change that name."

Hiccup's shield was taken roughly from him. Weaponless and dragonless, he was forced to stay where he was.

"Makes no sense." Dagur put his hand to the cage.

Toothless snarled. "\*\*\*Don't touch me.\*" He snapped at Dagur's fingers.

Dagur quickly pulled his hand back. "Look at all those teeth." He drew his sword. "You'll learn to respect me, dragon. Or I'll wear you as a hat."

"Leave him alone, Dagur," Hiccup called, trying to wrestle himself from the two Berserkers.

Dagur turned. "Put him with his father. We'll dispose of them later."

They tied Hiccup up and brought Stoick out to the arena.

Dagur was giggling and pacing around Toothless' cage.

"Are the other dragon riders here, son?" Stoick whispered.

"Well, not exactly," Hiccup said, not wanting to say anything about Grim in case someone overheard them.

"Ah, the Berk fleet," said Stoick.

"No," replied Hiccup.

"Do you have any plan at all?" Stoick asked.

"I do, actually," Hiccup answered.

"Oh, good, good." There was silence while Stoick waited for Hiccup to say something. "Would you like to fill me in?"

"Uh, no, I'd just like to watch it unfold if it's all the same to you," said Hiccup.

"I have big plans for you, Mr. Night Fury," Dagur said. "You'll be the new symbol of the Berserkers. Every corner of the archipelago will know and fear you."

An Outcast whispered to his companion. "Do you think this is a good idea? You heard what the boy said. If Dagur hurts a dragon or Stoick and his son -."

"It was just to scare the chief," the other Outcast said.

"But what if he really did curse Dagur? You saw how he disappeared. He must be some sort of sorcerer."

"You listen to too many stories," said the other Outcast. "He's just a boy. He can't do anything to hurt us."

An Outcast guarding Hiccup and Stoick was pulled underground.

"Of course we'll need to change all the sails and shields and I'll need a new belt buckle," Dagur continued on. "What's that gonna cost? We'll worry about that after we've burned Berk to the ground."

Another Outcast disappeared underground.

Hiccup and Stoick looked at each other.

Dagur turned around to Toothless. "Hey! How about Deathkiller?"

Two more Outcasts were disappeared underground.

"You like that name? Deathkiller? No? Ah, well, we'll keep brainstorming. I mean there's gotta be 'Death' in it, right? I mean -."

He was cut off as a Whispering Death sprang up from the ground behind him. It broke through the metal cage of the ceiling. It was followed by other Whispering Deaths. The ground in the arena split open because of how unstable it was.

The Whispering Deaths circled back. Alvin was holding on to one's tail while holding Mildew with the other hand. He threw Mildew at Toothless' cage. Mildew got up and let Toothless out.

"Alvin, Mildew, and Whispering Deaths?" said Stoick. "This was your plan?"

"Did not see that coming, did you?" Hiccup asked.

Alvin let go of the Whispering Death and untied Hiccup and Stoick. "Just like the good ol' days," he laughed.

Hiccup grabbed his shield. Alvin and Stoick began beating down Outcasts. Toothless was using his plasma blasts. The Whispering Deaths were knocking the Outcasts around, not killing them. They remembered what the human boy asked them to do in their own dialect.

"Come on, Toothless!" Hiccup called. He ran to join Toothless.

The floor of the arena collapsed in some areas.

"Toothless!" Hiccup cried. He was one of the lucky ones who had found stable ground, but Toothless had fallen.

The arena's ceiling collapsed in with a horrible screeching sound. The ground under Hiccup's feet gave. Hiccup jumped to the collapsing ceiling, dropping his shield, but he found a good grip on one of the bars.

Stoick jumped to the side of the arena and pulled himself up. Alvin knocked out an Outcast and fell. Stoick grabbed Alvin's hand and threw him over the side of the arena.

Toothless got to his feet and saw Dagur had landed next to him.

"Okay, Night Fury, come to Daddy," Dagur said.

Toothless tried to fire a plasma blast, but nothing came out.

"Six shot limit," Hiccup muttered from above the pit. "Oh, great." He felt the ceiling threatening to fall into the pit.

Toothless cried out. "\*\*\*Hold on, Hiccup!\*" He turned to find Dagur had been joined by a few Berserkers.

"Get me my Night Fury!" demanded Dagur.

Toothless beat the other Berserkers off. He was surprised to find that Dagur had jumped into the saddle.

"\*\*\*Get off me!\*" Toothless bucked furiously. From above, he could hear Hiccup calling his name. Hiccup was slipping. "\*\*\*Hold on, Hiccup!\*"

"Come on already!" whined Dagur.

Toothless managed to dislodge Dagur enough to bring his tail up and smack him so hard that Dagur was sent clean across the pit. Toothless jumped up to higher ground.

Hiccup looked down at Toothless and nodded.

"\*\*\*Let go! I got you!\*" Toothless roared back.

Hiccup let go with a yell. Toothless jumped under Hiccup and Hiccup landed squarely in the saddle. He quickly slipped his prosthetic into the pedal and they safely landed.

"Oh, great," said Hiccup.

Berserkers and Outcasts attacked. Once again, Toothless had to rely on his tail, wings, and claws to beat them back.

Hiccup gritted his teeth. There was another swarm of Berserkers coming and he wasn't sure if they could beat them all.

Green gas shot down between Hiccup and Toothless and the attacking Berserkers. They looked up to see Barf and Belch swooping down with



Ruffnut and Tuffnut on their backs.

"Whoa, this is chaos on a level I have never seen before!" cried Ruffnut.

"I know," said Tuffnut. "I want to live here."

"Forever!" Ruffnut added.

"Boy, are we ever glad to see you guys," said Hiccup.

Stormfly hovered next to Toothless.

"Don't thank us yet," said Astrid. "Things are about to get a lot crazier."

As the battle was taken up out of the pit, Grim jumped from Deathshriek and began fighting separately.

"Grim!" Hiccup called. He had sent Grim to rendezvous with the other riders and fill them in on what was happening.

Grim heard Hiccup and whipped around to slash a Berserker. "Fishlegs is coming!"

They heard a very terrified scream echo from across the sea.

Toothless landed next to Stoick.

"Why in the name of Odin did you bring that here?" Stoick burst out.

"This may be the only chance we have to get rid of it," Hiccup replied. "I saw the Screaming Death's mother. It's been destroying those islands searching for her."

"That thing has a mother?" Stoick asked in shock.

"Yeah," Hiccup replied.

They heard the Screaming Death roar and they could see it right on Meatlug's tail. At the same time, one of the Whispering Deaths hissed up at the Screaming Death.

"They have seen each other," said Grim. "We need to get them together and leave quickly."

"Then what?" Astrid asked as Stormfly fired at someone.

"I'm hoping it does exactly what I think it should," Hiccup cut in.

"And what would that be?" Astrid asked.

"Something good," said Hiccup.

The Screaming Death roared. The sound shook the island and made the others cringe.

"Now, Fishlegs! Now!" Hiccup shouted up to him.

"Thank Odin. Thank Odin. Thank Odin," Fishlegs said. He reached over and untied the dragon root he was towing. "Root away!"

The dragon root fell into the sea.

The Whispering Death called out to the Screaming Death. The Screaming Death turned to her and roared back.

Dagur stood up. "I see. It wants its mommy." He and several Berserkers roped the Whispering Death.

"Dagur, no!" yelled Hiccup. "You don't know what you're doing. You let that Whispering Death go before you destroy us all."

"Why would I do that?" Dagur asked. "Hello! I'm deranged!"

"Well, can't argue with logic like that, right?" Tuffnut said from Belch's back.

The Whispering Death screeched and struggled to get free.

The Screaming Death swooped down and tore a trench in the ground to try to get to the Whispering Death without hurting her.

Savage, standing a ways from the pit, turned and said, "That's my cue."

Back in the pit, Dagur had managed to get a spear. "Back off, Hiccup. You know if I destroy her, that thing will take us all out."

"He's right," Hiccup said to the others. "Everyone, back off."

"Wise choice," said Dagur. "Now, I might be interested in a trade."

"Dagur!" snarled Grim.

"Oh, come on, really! You couldn't see this coming?"

"Never retreat, never surrender!"

They all looked up to see Hookfang circling the pit.

"Snotlout!" Hiccup yelled to warn him to stop.

Snotlout didn't listen.

Hookfang flamed up made a massive fireball and shot it down into the pit next to the Whispering Death. It knocked everyone back and freed the Whispering Death.

The Whispering Death roared up to the Screaming Death before turning to Hiccup and Grim. Hiccup only nodded. The Whispering Death turned to the other Whispering Deaths and they all flew over to the Screaming Death.

"\*\*Thank you,\*\*" they said.

The riders followed them out of the pit. For a moment, the Screaming Death didn't look as threatening, especially when the Whispering Death and Screaming Death bumped noses.

The Screaming Death remembered the other riders. It swooped down and was eye level the best it could with its massive size with Hiccup, Toothless, Grim, and Deathshriek.

"\*\*You saved them,\*\*" growled the Screaming Death. "\*\*Thank you.\*\*" It let out a very loud roar that would have blown them back if the dragons weren't bracing themselves and the riders weren't holding on. "\*\*If I ever see you again, I'll eat you!\*\*" With a final glare, the Screaming Death turned away.

"You're welcome!" Hiccup called.

"\*\*Glad that's over,\*\*" said Toothless and got a pat on the head from Hiccup.

Hookfang landed in front of Toothless.

Snotlout began to speak in a rush. "Okay, I know I wasn't following orders, Hiccup, but I â€" well, um."

"Snotlout," said Hiccup. "You did the right thing."

"Yeah, I did, but â€" wait, what?" Snotlout was genuinely confused. "Are you messing with me? I was reckless."

"Sometimes reckless can be courageous," Hiccup said.

Hookfang moved so he was standing next to Toothless and Snotlout and Hiccup were beside each other.

Hiccup continued, "Your suspension is, well, suspended." He held out his hand.

Snotlout smiled and shook Hiccup's hand.

There was a battle cry and Dagur came charging at them with the spear. He didn't get far before someone put their fist out and Dagur ran face first into it.

"'Ello, Dagur," cooed Alvin. "Remember me?"

"Oh, no," said Dagur.

Alvin roughly pulled Dagur up by the front of his shirt.

"No!" cried Dagur. "Hiccup? Brother?"

Alvin just laughed, thinking about what he was going to do with Dagur.

Grim gave Dagur a disturbing smirk. "I warned you, Dagur. Your plans have failed, you've lost everything, your sins have come back to haunt you, and here I am to see it all."

\* \* \*

><p>The sun was setting when Alvin and Stoick stood out on a cliff looking out at the water. Hiccup, Toothless, Grim, and Deathshriek were standing back to give them some privacy.<p>

"'Oo'd 'ave thought it would come to this, eh, Stoick?" Alvin asked.

"There's more than enough blame to go around, Alvin," said Stoick. "But that's in the past. What you did today for me, for my sons." He held his hand out.

Alvin was surprised, but shook Stoick's hand.

Everyone went home.

\* \* \*

><p>Stoick, Hiccup, and Grim stood on the cliff outside of the Academy. Hiccup was sitting on Toothless, while Grim was standing next to Deathshriek.<p>

"You know, son," Stoick said to Hiccup, "you're gonna be a great chief someday. One of the best, I wager."

"Yeah," Hiccup chuckled. "If the last few days are any indication of what it's like to be chief, I'd just as soon leave that to you."

"You won't be alone," said Stoick. He turned to Grim. "You'll have your brother looking out for you."

"I told you, I don't want to lead," Grim reminded.

"I know," said Stoick. "But you could be an advisor."

Grim's mouth twitched as he thought about the idea.

"Retreat! Retreat!" Hookfang flew across the sky on fire. "Hookfang! Ow, ow, ow-ow-ow! It burns, it burns, it burns!"

The other riders caught up to Snotlout.

"Hiccup, Grim, we need you," said Astrid.

"Stoick!" Gobber came running. "Silent Sven just broke his silence and you're not going to like what he has to say."

"Go," Stoick said to his sons. "Looks like we both have our own chiefting to do."

"Come on, bud," Hiccup said to Toothless.

Grim swung himself onto Deathshriek and nudged him to go.

\* \* \*

><p>"<em>This is Berk. We've got ice, we've got snow, and we've got more ice. But we've also got dragons. We train them, learn from them, protect them, and they protect us, sometimes from ourselves. One thing's for sure, we wouldn't trade this for anything."<em>

\* \* \*

><p><strong>Thank you all for your support of this installment and this series. The next installment is titled Dragon Relations. It will be under the crossover section with Deltora Quest. The installment happens after the Deltora book series ends, this includes The Shadowlands and Dragons of Deltora. If you haven't read those books, you may be a little lost, but Hiccup and Grim have to learn about Deltora, too. And a little bonus, some of you are finally going to get that ever burning question answered: you know what I mean.<strong>

End  
file.